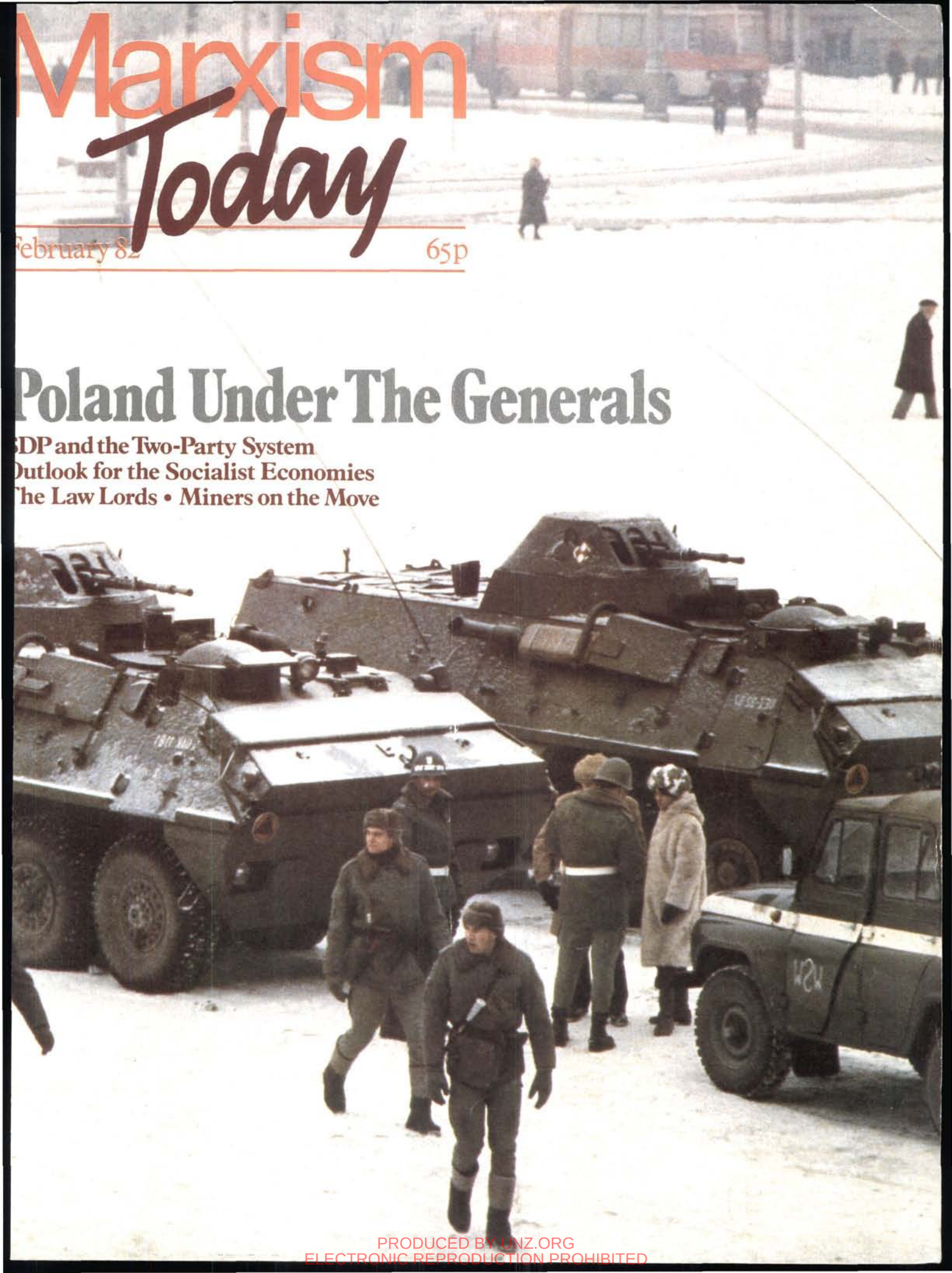
# Marxism Today

February 82 65p

## Poland Under The Generals

SDP and the Two-Party System
Outlook for the Socialist Economies
The Law Lords • Miners on the Move



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For the First Time in the Wrestling Ring

# 7:84 (ENGLAND)

present a Fight to the Finish
Between a Man and a Woman

# TRAFFORD TANZI

(The Venus Fly Trap)

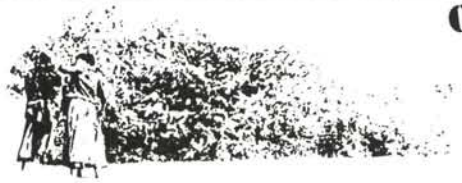
# V.

The Ever Popular

# DEAN REBEL

see Claire Luckham's noisy
bruising, exhausting
and funny show at:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Nuffield Studio, Lancaster**<br>5-6 February | **Coventry**<br>16 February |
| **Corby Civic Centre**<br>9 February | **Wednesbury Labour Club**<br>17 February |
| **Clay Cross Social Centre**<br>10 February | **Solihull College of Technology**<br>18 February |
| **Cotgrave Miners' Welfare Club**<br>11 February | **Birmingham**<br>20 February |
| **International Community Centre, Nottingham**<br>12 February | **The Premises, Norwich**<br>22 February |
| **Northampton College of Further Education**<br>13 February | **St Georges Art Club, Gt Yarmouth**<br>24 February |
| | *All performances 7.30 pm* |



# OVAL HOUSE

**Offers workshops in Tap Dance, Modern Dance, Acting & Interacting, Acrobatics, Jazz Dance, Commedia del 'Arte, Mime, Gymnastic Dance, Writing for Performance, Juggling & Stilt Walking, Street Theatre, Cinema, Circus Skills & Theatre.**

**For details of these workshops, other Oval House activities and membership, contact Alphie or Martin on 01-735 2786.**

**54 KENNINGTON OVAL SE11.**

# the new cinema

24-32 Carlton Street Nottingham

## NEW FILMS ON IRELAND

*4/5 February 7.30pm*

**MAEVE**

**a film directed by Pat Murphy**

*16 February 7.30pm*

**CROSS AND PASSION**

**A documentary by Claire Pollock**

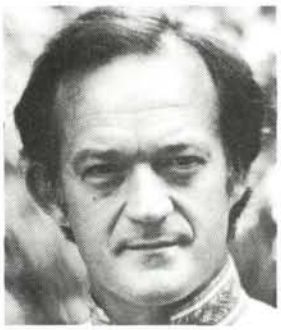
*Admission £1.30. Students and claimants £1.*

# FOCO NOVO

## THEATRE COMPANY

on tour with
EDWARD II by BERTOLT BRECHT

*David Dixon as Edward*



*Ian Hogg as Mortimer*

**2-6 February** — 7.30pm — 0352 55114
**Theatre Clwyd, Mold.**
**8-13 February** — 7.45pm — 688 9291
**Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon.**
**16-20 February** — 7.30pm — 0268 23953
**Towngate Theatre, Basildon.**
**23 February-13 March** — 7.30pm
**Round House Theatre, London** — 267 2564
**15-20 March** — 7.45pm — 0432 59252
**Nell Gwynne Theatre, Hereford.**

# new THE ALBANY EMPIRE

Douglas Way, Deptford, SE8

**The Combination presents**

**ALL WHO SAIL IN HER**

Feb 5/6/7 at 8.30

**The Basement Theatre present**

**TABLETALK**

Feb 10/11/16/17/18 at 8.30

**Keith Allen presents**

**WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE AA MAN'S SALUTE**

Feb 12/13/14/19/20/21 at 8.30

**Black Theatre Co-operative present**

**TROJANS by Farrukh Dhondy**

Feb 25/26/27/28 at 8.30

Ring 691-3333 for details

**BAR-FOOD-DANCING**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism Today
Theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party

# Contents

February 1982 Volume 26 Number 2

## Focus 2
Going Private • Nicaragua • Crisis in the Prisons

Chris Husbands
## The Politics of Confusion 6
The two-party system is under greater threat than at anytime since 1945. Chris Husbands, a lecturer in sociology at the London School of Economics, traces the growth in political volatility culminating in the present challenge from the SDP/Liberal Alliance

Monty Johnstone
## Poland's Military Crackdown 13
On December 13 a 'state of war' was declared in Poland. Monty Johnstone assesses the significance of the military takeover and its implications.

Vic Allen
## The Miners on the Move 17
The miners have been the scourge of British governments for over a decade. Now, in Arthur Scargill, they have a militant president. Vic Allen, author of *The Militancy of British Miners,* examines the radicalisation of the miners.

## Outlook for the Socialist Economies 22
**A roundtable discussion with Wlodzimierz Brus, Julian Cooper, Michael Ellman and Mario Nuti.**
The prospects for the capitalist world in the eighties look bleak. But the economic outlook for the socialist countries is not much better.

John Griffith
## The Law Lords and the GLC 29
The Law Lords have stunned the Left. Here John Griffith, author of *The Politics of the Judiciary,* examines the reasoning of the Law Lords and some of its implications.

## Channel Five 32
Interview with David Puttnam
St Valentines Day — Cath Jackson
What Chance Popular Theatre? — John McGrath

## Reviews 37
Tamara Deutscher — Solidarity: Poland's Independent Trade Union
Poland: The State of the Republic
Vicky Seddon — Subject Women

## Notes 39

**Editorial office**
16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY
Telephone 01-251 4406

**Editor** Martin Jacques

**Editorial office** Sally Davison

**Editorial board**
Irene Brennan, Jack Cohen, Dan Connor, John Foster, Jean Gardiner, Eric Hobsbawm, John Hoffman, Alan Hunt, Arnold Kettle, Betty Matthews, Bert Pearce, Dave Priscott, Bob Rowthorn, Mike Seifert.

**Reviews** John Kelly

**Channel Five** Sally Townsend

**Advertising** Sally Davison, Mike Naughton

**Circulation** Dave Grant

**Distribution**
*Newsagents:* Moore Harness Ltd
50 Eagle Wharf Rd, London N1 7ED
*Subscriptions and bookshops:*
Central Books Ltd, 14 The Leathermarket
London SE1 3ER

**Subscription rates** for one year
*Inland:* individuals £7.80, institutions £10.40
*Overseas:* individuals £10.40, institutions £13.00

The editor welcomes contributions for publication in the journal. Further details if required from the editorial office. Please send SAE if you want an acknowledgement or manuscript returned.

**Design** Peter Hammarling, Kathryn Tattersall
**Typeset** by Advantage Filmsetting Ltd
**Printed** by Farleigh Press Ltd (TU)
Watford, Herts

Cover photo: Scher/Frank Spooner Pictures

Published by the Communist Party
16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY
© February 1982, world copyright *Marxism Today*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# FOCUS

## GOING PRIVATE?

These are hard times for the National Health Service. News of bed closures and exposés of the appalling conditions in mental hospitals appear almost daily. And the Tory government now looks set to undermine the very foundations of a system which, for all its faults, still provides some of the best and most comprehensive health care in the world.

The plan to switch NHS funding from taxation to an insurance system has been under discussion since the May 1979 election. Now recommendations from a Department of Health and Social Security working party, to introduce a state insurance scheme and encourage greater use of private medical care, are being looked at by ministers.

This working party included civil servants and 'specialist consultants' from the private sector — but no NHS representatives. And although the word all along has been that DHSS mandarins are opposed to the idea, the government seems determined to go ahead.

Its intention to cut NHS spending, to push a notion of health as a private, not collective, responsibility, and to boost the private sector has been obvious since its earliest days in office. Plans to relax controls over private medicine, to encourage charity fund-raising and voluntary labour, and to retreat from the legal obligation to provide a full range of services were enshrined in the Health Services Act of 1980.

Now it is looking at alternatives to funding the NHS centrally from taxation, and DHSS experts have been gathering information from the USA, Australia and several European countries — ironically, at a time when other countries are considering introducing central funding to stem the abuses of insurance and private practice.

Ministers are likely to reject the American model, where the state steps in to help only those who cannot afford to buy their health care directly or through private insurance.

Another option is introducing more charges for items of service. But the likeliest choice is a state insurance scheme, copying elements of other European systems and backed up by a rapidly expanding private market.

In West Germany, over 90% of the population is covered by a state-supervised insurance scheme, with at least 10% also taking out private policies. In France, 90% are covered by a quasi-state-run scheme which meets only 80% of the costs — so about half also have private insurance to cover them for the gaps in state provision.

The drawbacks of such schemes are well known. Each patient has to prove eligibility, which means time and money spent in means-testing and form-filling. Each item of service has to be billed, submitted as a claim, assessed, argued over and paid for. Clearly this involves a great deal of administration, while the NHS actually spends comparatively little on administration: only 6% of the budget compared with 12% in Belgium and France, 18% in Australia and 21% in the USA. So although the government claims to be pruning waste, state insurance would cost more — and the cost would be borne by the private, not the public purse.

But more serious is the increased take-up of private insurance by those who fear the state system cannot meet their needs — and who want to buy better care than the run-down and alienating NHS provides. Subscriptions to BUPA and PPP, the biggest provident associations, rose by over 15% in 1979 and 27% in 1980, with an estimated 6.4% of the population now covered. At the same growth rate, the insured population will reach 20 million within a decade.

The provident associations claim to be non-profit-making, but they are a smokescreen for a highly profitable industry in which health care is turned into an attractive, marketable commodity. Private insurance is essential for the growth of private medicine, putting it within reach of many people who could not otherwise afford it. The premiums are surprisingly low: a 45-year-old man can insure himself and his family for as little as £2 a week.

The Left's criticism of private medicine has focussed on moral arguments about queue-jumping. But there are many other disadvantages. Private medicine needs a quick turnover of patients with conditions which can be easily treated, usually surgically. Long term conditions or disabilities are unprofitable and insurance policies have a long list of exemptions, including chronic (long term) diseases, mental illness, mental handicap, pregnancy and age-related problems.

Thus the NHS must still cope with all those 'problems' ignored by private medicine showing the naivety of the claim that the Tories want to dismantle the NHS. Indeed, the private sector is a parasite on the NHS. It uses expensive NHS facilities; it employs staff trained by the NHS; and consultants tout for private patients in NHS clinics.

A system which is primarily interested in living off the profitable patients also propagates distorted ideas about health and disease. Private medicine wants to 'treat' your heart disease with expensive tests and high-powered technology, not to eradicate the social and environmental triggers. Its glossy ads show heroic doctors performing miracle cures, helped by pretty nurses pouring tea from silver pots. Its profits increase promoting the idea that medical care equals health — a curative, interventionist approach which says illness is a matter of individual bad luck.

This makes it all the more difficult to per-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suade people and governments that good health care is about preventing the social production of disease. And it threatens to destroy the growing awareness that modern health care should increasingly be geared to meeting the needs of the long term sick and handicapped, and the elderly — people who already occupy over half the NHS's beds. Usually ignored by the medical establishment and those who allocate resources, the outlook for them is grim.

Opposition to private medicine must therefore embrace opposition to the new methods of funding the NHS. But building a broad-based campaign will be difficult because health care has always come rather low on the socialist agenda and standing against it is a formidable alliance of interests, all the more secure because of its informal links, its lack of accountability, its friends in high places and its grip on individual vulnerability — the fear of illness. This alliance is being constructed on the deficiencies of the NHS (while reaping its benefits), which are attributable not only to persistent underfunding but to its inability to transform the relations between 'providers' and 'consumers'.

The crisis in the NHS in short is much deeper than the immediate problem of funding. The growth of private medicine will not be halted by repressive measures alone, nor by injecting unlimited cash into the NHS. What is needed is not only a vigorous campaign against the private sector — but also a positive campaign for a truly socialist health service.

## NICARAGUA

Nicaragua enters 1982 under threat of United States military intervention. Accused of fomenting revolution in neighbouring Guatemala and El Salvador and of betraying early promises to install democracy, the leaders of Nicaragua's revolution are desperate not to provoke US aggression. They are nevertheless preparing for the defence of the revolution.

According to the Reagan administration Nicaragua is the new beach-head for Soviet expansionism in the Americas. Secretary of State Alexander Haig says Nicaragua's arms build up makes it a 'superpower in Central American terms'. And that without the alleged direct military assistance from both Cuba and Nicaragua the Salvadorean guerrillas would be quickly defeated by government forces in that country. Support for Soviet ambitions is allegedly accompanied by a drift towards 'Soviet style totalitarianism'. Top of the list of US complaints

is the unwillingness of the Sandinista leaders to hold elections immediately and their supposed failure to guarantee the property rights of private capital operating in the country.

Nicaragua's leaders and the majority of its people see things differently. Despite its extensive efforts to do so, the US administration has been unable to prove that Nicaragua is supplying arms to the El Salvadorean opposition. The evidence on this is so thin that the El Salvadorean governement itself has never made a formal protest at international level.

US claims of the Nicaraguan arms build up are vastly exaggerated. The 40-50,000 Nicaraguan army is dwarfed by the combined strength of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, all of whose governments are deeply hostile to the Sandinistas and have discussed joint military cooperation. Whereas the US media recently accused Nicaragua of receiving 1000 Vietnamese jet fighters, the Sandinista air force's real combat capacity rest on four T-33 fighter bombers (aircraft used by the USA in the Korean war). Neighbouring Honduras, whose army has already provoked several border incidents last year, has by comparison at least a dozen French Super Mystère jets.

The arms build up which *is* going on is justified, say the Sandinistas, by a relentless destabilisation campaign orchestrated from Washington, for which the main vehicles have been small opposition parties, recalcitrant members of the private sector, and the main opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. The Sandinistas hit back by imprisoning three businessmen who had published a letter which violated the recently decreed state of economic and social emergency. *La Prensa* has been closed five times, on the last two occasions for opening their pages to a businessman who was under legal investigation accused of openly decapitalising his factory.

At the same time though, the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to political pluralism and a mixed economy. The new political party law will give legal status to opposition parties, while a foreign investment law will create favourable terms for foreign investment, emphasising the Sandinistas continuing commitment to a mixed economy. So the Sandinistas firmly reject US accusations. Bayardo Arce, the secretary of the Sandinistas political committee, said recently:'Things are normal, though we don't deny there are difficulties. But the States is screeching to the world that Nicaragua is marching towards totalitarianism. It doesn't ring true. It's like putting on an Abba record in the middle of a wake.'

Yet in Washington Nicaragua has already been tried and found guilty and appropriate punishment is now being considered by President Reagan. As the top men look at the military options, the scenario is bleak. One US Congressman, foreign affairs committee

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Films can enliven all kinds of meetings and events – and you may be surprised at how easy they are to hire.

*Our list of 16mm films includes:*

**Victor Jara Sings**
B&W 30mins. £8. English commentary

**The Bonus**
Colour 90mins. £20. English sub-titles

**Daughter in Law**
Colour 90mins. £20. English sub-titles

**Blacks Britannica**
Colour 70mins. £20. English commentary

**Patchworks of Santiago**
Colour 10mins. £3. English commentary

**One Hand Clapping**
Colour 30mins. £9. English commentary

*For a complete set of catalogues (showing features, cartoons and documentaries) send £1.00 to:*

ETV **Educational & Television Films Limited**

247a, Upper Street, London N1 1RU
Telephone: 01-226 2298

**CLASSIFIED INFORMATION**

BUY IT, SELL IT, FIND IT, SHARE IT, TRAIN IT, DRAIN IT, USE IT, LOSE IT, FIX IT, MIX IT, HIRE IT, WIRE IT, SAY IT, SPRAY IT, READ IT, BREED IT, MEET IT, EAT IT, TREAT IT, BOOK IT, HOOK IT, BIKE IT, HIKE IT, TYPE IT, EXPLORE IT, IMPLORE IT, EXHORT IT, TRANSPORT IT, RECOVER IT, DISCOVER IT, RELAX IT, ATTRACT IT . . .

PLACE AN AD WITH US! ONLY 30P A WORD IF IT'S PRIVATE, 40P FOR TRADE! AND HALF THAT PRICE WITH THIS AD!

IT'S CHEAP! IT WORKS! RING US NOW! HALF PRICE ADS! UNTIL MAR 82

**CITY LIMITS!**

313 UPPER ST LONDON N1
226 0080

Zed

**NEW BOOKS FROM ZED NOW AVAILABLE**

Ghali Shoukri
**EGYPT: PORTRAIT OF A PRESIDENT**
Hb £25 Pb£8.95
A comprehensive survey of Sadat's background and regime.

George Black
**TRIUMPH OF THE PEOPLE: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua**
Hb £18.95 Pb £5.95

F Clairmonte and J Cavanagh
**THE WORLD IN THEIR WEB: The Dynamics of Textile Multinationals**
Hb £17.95
Facilitates an understanding of the basic tendencies that are currently reshaping the world capitalist economy.

D W Nabudere
**IMPERIALISM IN EAST AFRICA**
**Vol I Imperialism and Exploitation**
Hb £16.95
Provides a new approach to the modern history of East Africa.

For copy of new catalogue send 9x4 SAE to:
**ZED PRESS,**
57 Caledonian Road,
London N1 9DN.

War on Want is not like most other charities. War on Want seeks to eradicate the *causes* of world poverty, rather than simply treat the symptoms.

That's why when you give money to War on Want, you know it will be used to fund practical and progressive projects and campaigns which get to the root of the problem in Britain and in the Third World.

You can also become a member of War on Want for just £5. Or get your trade union branch to affiliate.

War on Want members take part in policy making, and help decide *who* will benefit.

467 CALEDONIAN ROAD, LONDON, N7 9BE
TELEPHONE 01-609 0211


PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chairman Michael Barnes said recently 'If I were Nicaraguan, I'd be building a bomb shelter'.

## CRISIS IN THE PRISONS

The Home Secretary's recent retreat from a proposal which would have cut substantially the population of our overcrowded prisons constitutes a further victory for the same pressures which caused his Labour predecessor, Merlyn Rees, to ditch a similar (though less radical) early release proposal four years ago. The two principal pressures emanate, in order of importance, from the political Right and from the judiciary and magistracy, and have deterred all recent governments from introducing the legislation necessary to restrict the courts' use of imprisonment.

A convenient starting point for a catalogue of latter-day inaction is 1975, when Roy Jenkins (who for some unaccountable reason has a reputation as a reforming Home Secretary) announced that if the prison population, then 40,500, exceeded 42,000, drastic action to relieve the position would be inevitable. The following year the prison population topped 42,000 for the first time, yet during the remainder of the Labour government's lifetime the 'inevitable' drastic action was notable by its absence.

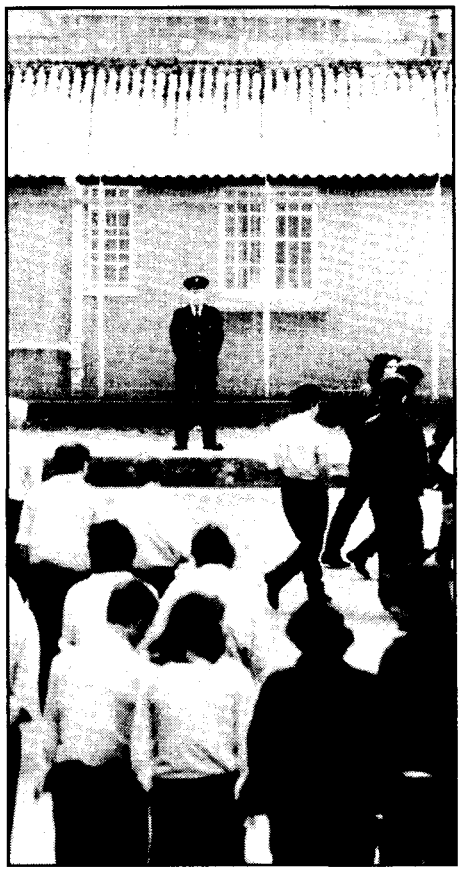
When Merlyn Rees became Home Secretary on Jenkins' departure for the EEC, he brought with him the experience of the conditional release scheme which, as Secretary of State, he had introduced in Northern Ireland in 1976. Under this scheme, fixed sentence prisoners earning full remission are now released at half sentence, instead of at two-thirds as before. Except for prisoners serving one year or less, this release is conditional: if they are convicted of an imprisonable offence during the remitted period of their sentence, they are liable to serve all or part of the balance of the sentence as well as the penalty for the new offence. There has been no increase in recidivism following the introduction of the scheme, and no evidence that the judiciary has reacted by lengthening sentences. Rees announced in Parliament that he was considering introducing a similar scheme in England and Wales for prisoners serving 18 months or less — a cautious proposal which would have reduced the daily prison population by around 3,000 people. However, the suggestion sank without trace in the face of the combined hostility of magistrates, the judiciary and those on the opposition benches.

The inertia of the Jenkins/Rees era ensured that in 1979 William Whitelaw inherited seriously deteriorating prison conditions and increasing overcrowding, with a real risk that the number of prisoners would soon exceed the physical limit which the prison system can sustain (around 45,0000). In mid-March 1980, the number of prisoners reached an unprecedented 44,600 and only the fortuitous intervention of the prison officers' industrial action (during which the courts exercised greater restraint than usual in imprisoning offenders) prevented the figure from reaching a new peak later in the year.

Following the ending of industrial action, the prison population rose rapidly from 39,600 on 5th January 1980 to 45,500 on 15th July, as a result of which two army camps were opened as temporary prisons to absorb the excess numbers. Since then the numbers have fallen and now stand at around 44,000 — a figure which is still far too high for the available accommodation and requires over a third of those in prison to spend most of every 24 hour period in an overcrowded cell without access to integral sanitary facilities. Unless decisive action is taken, an increase to 46,000 some time in the course of 1982 is all too probable.

Under the pressure of mounting overcrowding, in May Whitelaw canvassed a proposal whereby the middle third of the sentence of prisoners serving less than three years would be suspended, the offender being released under the supervision of a probation officer for this period, with remission of the final third of the sentence continuing to operate as now. By reducing the effective terms of imprisonment served by many short term prisoners, such a scheme could reduce the prison population by up to 7,000 — well short of the reduction to a population of 32,000 prisoners favoured by the prison governors' organisation, but nevertheless a far more radical proposal than anything ever canvassed by a Labour administration. Although provoking a hostile reception from the Magistrates' Association and the judiciary, it received strong all-party backing in Parliament, including the support of the Home Affairs Select Committee and the Parliamentary All-Party Penal Affairs Group, and up to mid-October the Home Secretary appeared set to go ahead with the proposal in the face of judicial opposition. Successive Ministerial speeches, while stressing that no final decision had been made, went out of their way to emphasise the possible advantages of such a scheme; but in mid-October, Whitelaw suffered a serious debacle at the Conservative Party Conference when a law and order motion which he supported was defeated by delegates advocating a plethora of hardline policies. Shortly afterwards the supervised release proposal was dropped officially as a result of representation from the judiciary.

The Home Secretary now proposes instead to permit courts to suspend part of a prison sentence of between 3 months and 2 years (at present courts can suspend all of a prison sentence, or none), claiming that this will enable sentencers to reduce the periods which some offenders spend in custody. The likelihood, however, is that this will also be widely used where courts would otherwise



have imposed a wholly suspended or non-custodial sentence, and the overall probable effect on the prison population is therefore unclear. Ministers are stressing the most favourable Home Office estimates, which suggest that the measure could reduce the prison population by around 4,000, but are refusing to release estimates made on more pessimistic assumptions, which in fact indicate that it could increase the number of prisoners by 8,000. The actual effect would be somewhere between these two estimates, with odds of about two to one that the measure will increase the prison population rather than reduce it: it is a gamble with the prison population, akin to playing Russian roulette with four of the gun's six chambers loaded.

*Contributors:* **Jane Salvage, John Fantham, Paul Cavadhino.**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chris Husbands

# The Politics of Confusion

## The old loyalties have weakened and the two-party system is now under threat

The success so far of the SDP has clearly been based almost entirely upon negative rather than positive motives, upon protest voting and perverseness rather than upon any genuinely and consistently articulated ideology of the political 'middle ground'. However, it is important to recognise the nature of the factors that have underlain the SDP's growth, because they may have implications for its short and medium term development. It must be appreciated that those considerations which have been adduced to predict the likely evanescence of the SDP may in fact imply the reverse, that its support may not be quite so volatile after all. The SDP's general lack of policies; the lack-lustre nature of most of its leadership; the deadbeat character of some of the MPs and local councillors whom it has attracted; the self-confessed political naivety of many of its activists; the fact that one of its few widely known policy positions — continued membership of the EEC — is opposed by many of its nominal supporters[1]: in a more rational political world where voting behaviour was predicated upon balanced and informed judgements about competing alternatives, these defects would quickly be fatal, producing uncertainty and disillusion even among its most favourably disposed supporters. However, the SDP's rise has occurred in a political climate in which negative voting has become so widespread that considerations of this sort may impinge only slowly upon the motives and attitudes of those voters disposed towards the party.

Part of this article argues that the SDP has been established at a time when political circumstances were perhaps at their most auspicious for the party's success. To be sure, this was not intentional since events in the Labour Party were the precipitating causes of the SDP's foundation; even so, it will be shown that its take-off has occurred at a time when several long term and short term factors have coincided to produce the most propitious situation for a new party making an appeal largely on the basis of spurious novelty.

There are certain voting trends in British politics that are by now well known and have been widely discussed. There is the decline in support for the two major parties. In October 1951 96.8% of the United Kingdom's turnout of 82.5% voted Labour or Conservative. By May 1979 only 80.8% of votes were cast for Conservative or Labour on a turnout of 76.0%, and the Conservatives' overall majority of 43 seats was won, as in 1970, from the support of barely a third of the eligible electorate.

As well as a trend away from the two major parties, there has been a corresponding decline in the strength of partisan attachment to these parties, even among those who nominally identify with them. This trend is now also well known, having been documented by a succession of poll data since the early 1960s.[2] One consequence of the decline in the proportion of the electorate with strong partisan attachments has been increased political detachability and volatility among the electorate. Symptoms of this are several.

One is dramatic oscillation in the support of the individual major parties, as reported month-by-month in the opinion polls, whether this has been for the government or the opposition party.[3] The Gallup Poll's month by month support for the 1951-55 Tory Government never rose above 48% or fell below 40%. The support for the 1955-59 Tory government varied between 48% and (briefly) 33.5% and registered almost no impact at the time of the Suez crisis. The range for the 1959-64 Tory government was from 50% to a brief minimum of 31% at the time of the Profumo affair. The 1966-70 Labour government at one point early in its term had the expressed support of 53.5% per cent of the electorate, though it also reached a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new nadir in May and June 1968 of 28%. The 1970-74 Tory government ranged between 47% and 31.5% and the last Labour government's support varied from a maximum of 48.5% to a minimum of 30%. The Thatcher government has never been supported by more than 42% and at 26.5% its November Gallup Poll rating plumbed depths reached by no other recent government.

Electoral volatility has also revealed itself in dramatic swings against the sitting government in parliamentary by-elections since the mid-1960s. Swings of up to 20% and more have become far from unknown in by-elections in the last fifteen years.

Finally, there has been the widely discussed phenomenon of the 'class dealignment' of British politics over the past two decades, ie, the decline of the relationship between class membership and voting behaviour. In October 1964 the percentage advantage in favour of the Conservatives over Labour among upper middle class voters was 53%; by May 1979 it had declined to 44%, still high but a marked fall nonetheless. Complementarily, in October 1964 Labour's percentage advantage over the Conservatives among working class voters was 28% but by May 1979 it was only 7%. In the latter election skilled manual working class voters and their wives who opted for one of the two major parties divided their loyalties almost equally between Conservative and Labour.

**one consequence has been increased political volatility among the electorate**

'Class dealignment' has been of particular significance among certain sections of the electorate. It is noticeable, for example, among younger middle class voters, although younger working class voters in 1979 were not significantly less pro-Labour than older ones. However, it is perhaps the regional variations that are most interesting. Labour support among manual workers and their wives ranged in 1979 from 32% in the South West to 60% in the North of England.[4] Such differences are also suggested by the variations in swing to the Conservatives from region to region. The pro-Tory swing, calculated upon total votes cast, between October 1974 and May 1979 was 6.5% among Greater London constituencies and 6.9% in the rest of the South East. In the West Yorkshire conurbation it was 3.5% and in seats in the Greater Manchester conurbation it was only 2.9%.

## CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENTAL COMPETENCE

These long term trends all establish the political context in which it has been possible for a party such as the SDP to break through the barrier of minimum electoral support and become a seemingly viable alternative. However, there are other factors that have been additionally favourable and that have in fact been causes of some of the 'loosening' of the political system already discussed. These factors have to do with the expectations of the public about governmental competence in various areas of economic management. In order to appreciate what these are and to see how they have changed, it is valuable to adopt a more historical perspective.

The argument is set out in part by inferences from the accompanying graphs, which are highly revealing about the sort of economic factors that have affected the popularity of different governments.[5] Four separate periods of government since 1966 are considered in turn.[6]

### The 1966-70 Labour government

The Wilson government of 1966-70 began on a pinnacle of public sympathy but, within little more than a year, it was supported less than was the opposition and, within eighteen months, it was entering the nadir of its popular appeal. However, there are certain paradoxes about the trends in its support. Its ratings held reasonably steady during the earlier period of its term of office when wages were barely keeping pace with prices. The decline in Labour's support occurred at the time when there was a modest improvement in the average standard of living, although the parallel paths of the two series from mid-1968 to late 1969 show that in this period increases in the actual cost of living were about commensurate with increases in wages. One reason for the Wilson government's lack of popularity was its dubious competence in handling unemployment. The levels of unemployment in that period were minuscule from the perspective of the present. Even so, the rate of unemployment more than doubled between 1966 and 1970, much of the increase occurring in the first year of the government's term of office. Labour's popularity seems to have survived this but it was undoubtedly affected by the continued refusal of the Wilson government to adopt policies that would substantially ameliorate the situation, and the rate persisted at a plateau of 2.2 to 2.5% for the final three years of its term.

### The 1970-74 Tory government

Unemployment remains a factor in accounting for the Gallup Poll ratings of Heath's 1970-74 government. The rate rose gently but steadily until early 1972 and this was undoubtedly a factor in the early and sharp decline in popular support for the Heath government till mid-1971. The later decline in unemployment was not sufficient substantially to improve the ratings of this government in the latter part of its term of office, when it was also afflicted by a growing level of Liberal support. Yet there is one very clear and perhaps surprising aspect about the Heath government's term of office; the average standard of living improved fairly steadily and consistently throughout the period, as is shown by the increase and the divergence of the two series, the general index of retail prices and the wage-rate index. The only suggestion of future difficulties on this subject is the slight upward turn in the retail price index in consequence of the world economic upheavals after the Yom Kippur War. Even so, the Heath government's popularity was affected by its attempt to impose a strict public-sector pay policy and, ironically, by the fact that retail prices — irrespective of any average trends in real wages — rose by more than 10% a year from mid-1970 to early 1974,

[1] This finding and certain others reported later in the article have been taken from various polls carried out by NOP Market Research Limited, some conducted on behalf of *The Observer*. I am grateful to both NOP and also *The Observer* for permitting me to take information from unpublished tabulations.

[2] See, for example, Ivor Crewe, 'The Labour Party and the Electorate', in Dennis Kavanagh (ed), *The Politics of the Labour Party* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982); and Paul Olive, 'Realignment: The Case of the Liberals', *Marxism Today*, May 1981, pp 12-18.

[3] Norman L Webb and Robert J Wybrow (eds), *The Gallup Report* London: Sphere Books, 1981, pp 168-185.

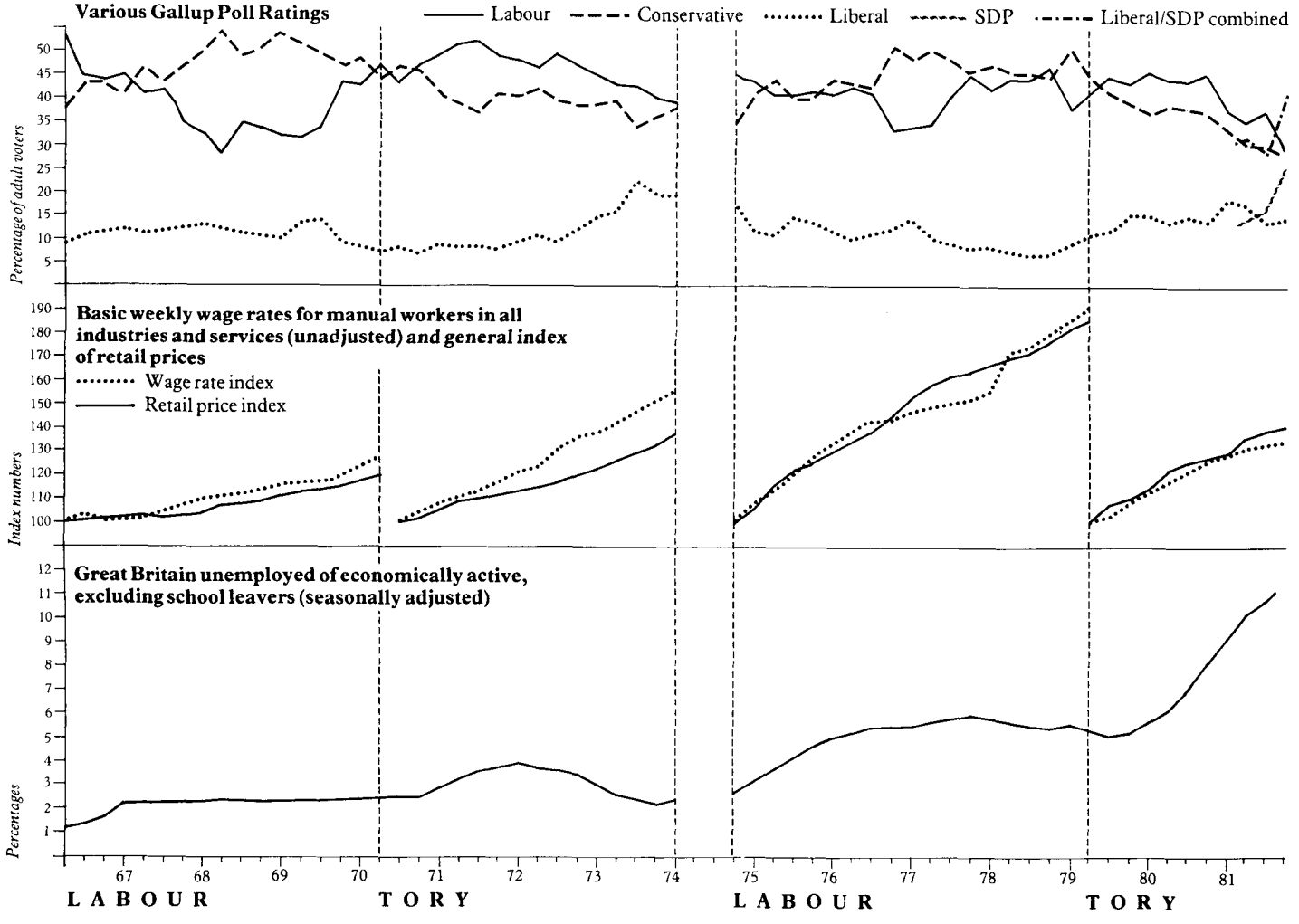
[4] Richard Rose, 'Class Does Not Equal Party: The Decline of a Model of British Voting', *Studies in Public Policy* No 74 (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 1980), pp 20, 34 and 40.

[5] The graphs show levels of support reported quarter-by-quarter by the Gallup Poll for the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Parties; the lines plot the three-month averages.

Also shown in each graph are the trends in the corresponding periods of three economic series: the seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment in Great Britain, excluding school leavers; the basic weekly wage rates for manual workers in all industries and services; and the general index of retail prices for all items.

[6] This emphasis on economic factors is not intended to imply that these are the only determinants of government popularity.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED




PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

compared with less than 5% per annum during the 1966-70 Wilson government. In December 1971 43% of the electorate thought unemployment the most urgent problem facing the country, while only 21% ascribed this status to the cost of living. However, by September 1973 the respective percentages were 3% and 59%.

**The 1974-79 Labour government**

It is the Wilson/Callaghan government's term of office that brings us to the era when there is the clearest relationship between government popularity and the cost of living. This is shown in the relevant graph, as is the decline in the relationship between, on the one hand, unemployment and its rate of increase and, on the other, governmental support. The rate of unemployment rose steadily throughout the first year of the 1974-79 Labour government but there was no precipitate decline in its popularity of the sort that a comparable trend after June 1970 had seen for Heath's government. True,

> The very public nature of the Deputy Leadership battle was an extra blow to the popular support of the party

Labour's support descended a little from an artificial pinnacle achieved after the October 1974 election but it remained quite surprisingly stable until after the third quarter of 1976. The sudden downturn began with the sterling crisis in the autumn of that year, when the retail price index began to increase at a rate faster than that of manual workers' wages. Labour's deep unpopularity persisted through most of the period between late 1976 and late 1977, when there was an average absolute decline in the standard of living of most of the population. True, Labour's recovery in the polls began a little before the trend of improved living standards became well established, partly perhaps because of the attempt to prevent further increases in the rate of unemployment through various regional policies. Even so, the relationship between the lack of popularity of the 1974-79 Labour government and trends in the cost of living is unexceptionable, as is the failure of Labour's support to decline significantly in response to the doubling of the rate of unemployment in the first year of its term.

A new pattern of political responses to economic factors established itself for the first time in the 1974-79 period. There seems to have developed in most of the electorate at that time a greater indifference to increased levels of unemployment, perhaps because most people themselves were not unemployed, perhaps because it was increasingly felt to be something over which governments had little real control, and perhaps too because of a decline in sympathy for the plight of the unemployed. Instead, the evidence of these series, as well as of opinion-poll data on perceptions of the most urgent problem facing the country, suggests that prices and the cost of living became one of the most important of the public's yardsticks for assessing governmental competence during the first couple of years of the 1974-79 Labour government. The Wilson/Callaghan administration was assessed mid-term on this criterion and found deficient by a large number of voters.

**The Tory government since 1979**

Like Mr Heath after June 1970, the Thatcher government had almost no honeymoon period of popularity; in fact, its first major act of economic policy was to increase the rate of value-added tax to 15%, a change that had immediate negative effects upon the cost of living. Labour went into the ascendant in the opinion polls. There was a very slight decline in the level of unemployment after May 1979, doubtless a hangover from policies adopted by the previous Labour government towards the end of its term, but thereafter the rate of unemployment, even seasonally adjusted, began a precipitate increase that accelerated from the second quarter of 1980; the official figure stood at over 11% in the final part of 1981. However, Conservative support remained relatively immune to the effects of this increase until at least the last quarter of 1980, when the sharp fall in Tory support in the polls was clearly a consequence of the apparent government indifference to spiralling unemployment rates, indeed its active pursuit of policies whose consequence could only be more unemployment.

The 1974-79 Labour government had apparently received the absolution of many voters while it presided over an unemployment increase of more than 100% in four years. The Thatcher Government achieved this same multiple of increase in barely two years but there was clearly a limit to public indifference to the upward trend, especially as — with such high absolute levels — its effects ramified throughout the population and far beyond those immediately and personally affected. Opinion-poll data also bear out the increasing public unease about unemployment as 1980 progressed; as late as June of that year the recent concern about inflation and the cost of living at the expense of a reduction in unemployment was borne out by the Gallup Poll. By November 1981 71% of those asked thought unemployment was the most urgent problem facing the country; only 10% gave this status to the cost of living.

Even so, there is an interesting analogy between trends in the cost of living and the loss of support for the Conservatives to the benefit of the SDP. The relationship between prices and wages remained reasonably constant after the increase in the retail price index immediately after the beginning of Mrs Thatcher's term of office. True, the rise in manual workers' average wages has never exceeded that of the retail price index (taking the second quarter of 1979 as the base in each case) but, until the second quarter of 1981, the two series were close to each other. Then occurred a sharp divergence as increases in prices began dramatically to exceed wage increases, a process that will have been particularly marked in certain public-sector employment though far from exclusively confined to this part of the labour force. It compares, in fact, with the performance of the same indices in the final quarter of 1976 during the previous Labour government.

In 1976 the effect of this decline in real wages was to the benefit of the Conservatives and at the expense of Labour; there is little suggestion in the Gallup Poll data at that time of any direct benefit

> to many voters the novel and untried but seemingly viable promise of the SDP has a visceral appeal

for the Liberals, though a slight local peak in the first quarter of 1977 may have been at the expense of the Conservatives. In 1981, however, the scenario was rather different since circumstances had altered. In fact, even though probably adventitiously, one might say that the situation in early 1981 was uniquely propitious for the breakthrough of the new party; disaffection with the Conservatives had developed during the previous year as public unease turned to impatience over the increase in unemployment. The further factor detaching support from the Conservatives was their clear failure to maintain real wages, a failure that had become more than evident in the public awareness by the middle of the year. Of course, in many circumstances this Conservative decline would have benefited the Liberals or Labour or both. Indeed, the Liberals clearly did achieve some short term benefit from Conservative decline in the first quarter of 1981. This was short-lived and at 15% the end-of-year level of support for the Liberals alone is hardly remarkable.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

### The Case of the Labour Party

Let us briefly consider why the Labour Party has not benefited from the decline in Conservative support, as self-evidently it has not. During 1981 its percentage of intending voters has fallen almost simultaneously with the Conservative loss. As recently as January 1981 Labour's percentage support in the Gallup Poll was 46.5%, a lead of 13.5% over the Conservatives. A month later the figure for Labour was down to 35.5%. The intervening event was the Wembley Conference on 24 January and it would be naive to deny the damaging effects of this. The outcome of the Conference was widely seen as divisive for the Party and, more crucially, was interpreted as a victory for 'the Left'. This latter was precisely the angle pushed by most of the hostile media.

The story of Labour's decline continued during most of 1981. In September's Gallup Poll its support stood at 36.5%; by October the figure was 28%. The very public nature of the Deputy Leadership battle, perhaps a necessary purgative from one perspective, was nonetheless an extra blow to the popular support of the party. There seems a clear relationship between the latter event and the breakthrough of the SDP to be the senior partner, if only in electoral terms, of the new Liberal/SDP Alliance. In September the SDP's percentage of support was 17.5%; by 29 October it was 26.5%. The Croydon North West by-election of 22 October may have contributed to this, but it is suggestive that the Croydon victor was a Liberal and yet the Gallup Poll increase in Liberal support from September to October was a modest 2%.

## THE FATE OF THE ALLIANCE

Of course, the question at this point is whether current levels of support for the Alliance can persist. In order to attempt an answer to this it is necessary to revert to a historical perspective. During periods of Labour government, as between 1966 and 1970 or 1974 and 1979, Liberal support tends to limp along. There have been occasional peaks to be sure, but only in the most exceptional circumstances has it reached 15% and often it has fallen below 10%, as an inspection of the earlier graphs will confirm. However, as every armchair psephologist knows, things are usually rather different during periods of Tory rule. There has been much talk recently of Orpington, Sutton and Cheam, and so forth. Indeed, during the final eighteen months of Mr Heath's government Liberal support climbed steadily and was well above 20% for four heady months in late 1973. Of course, in February 1974 the Liberals won 19.3% of the total vote.

The period since May 1979 has not been quite like that, despite some local election successes. If the rise in Liberal support in the first quarter of 1981 appeared the start of a revival, this was soon brought to earth by figures for the rest of the year. If anything, on the basis of the aggregate figures, the rise of the SDP nipped any straight Liberal resurgence in the bud; no wonder David Steel realised that the only way for the Liberals to gain anything from the present political situation was in alliance with the SDP. Let us see whether received knowledge about the Liberal vote can be of any assistance in foretelling the likely future success of the SDP.

> the current depth of Labour's unpopularity as an opposition party is unprecedented

The most pertinent recent research on this subject is that carried out by Alt and his colleagues on the Liberal supporters of February 1974.[7] The Liberal vote of that time was shown to be a diverse and temporary assembly of voters; a small, reasonably stable Liberal core, concentrated in regions and constituencies of persisting Liberal disposition, was supplemented by a larger group of voters who — if one can characterise them rather unkindly — had something of the nature of a Poujadist rabble. The recent study of Hilde Himmelweit and her colleagues, using the data-base of a London male sample (ie, an area without any great continuing tradition of Liberal support), claims that the Liberal vote is even more diverse; consistent Liberals in this sample were almost non-existent and one of the major conclusions of the research was that different individuals constituted the Liberal vote at successive general elections.[8]

In essence therefore, it seems likely that current SDP support consists of some former Conservative voters (those with weak partisan attachment) who in rather different political circumstances would have been part of the 'Poujadist rabble' component of a strong Liberal revival, supplemented by numerous one-time Labour supporters. Poll data collected on Alliance supporters at the beginning of October 1981 show that, in the aggregate, they lack special social distinctiveness. Alliance supporters have a very slight tendency to be younger (below 45) and to reside in the South of England rather than in Wales and Scotland.[9] However, such disproportions are not dramatic and in effect the Alliance's support, like that of the Liberals in February 1974, mirrors a social profile of the electorate as a whole.

### A passing whim?

If the SDP's support really is ephemeral, one might not be too concerned about the likely permanence of the Alliance. The political 'homing instinct' that usually asserts itself as a general election approaches might be expected to operate once again. Yet there are reasons why this scenario may not simply be repeated. The two major parties may well remain unpopular; political interest and sophistication (as opposed to what pass as such among some political analysts) are for most voters perhaps as poorly developed as in any western electorate; to many voters the novel and untried but seem-

**In the month of St Valentine, wouldn't you just love a subscription to Marxism Today?**

The rates for one year are:
**Inland** individuals £7.80, institutions £10.40
**Overseas** individuals £10.40. institutions £13

Send to Central Books,
14 Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER

**Yes! I would love a subscription to Marxism Today, starting with the issue.**

I enclose my cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

MT Feb 82

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ingly viable promise of the SDP has a visceral appeal. In a survey conducted by Butler and Stokes in 1969 only 17% of those interviewed said that they had 'a good deal' of interest in what's going on in politics and an additional 39% said that they had 'some' interest, though one doubts whether the latter answer implies major political sophistication.[10] In a survey conducted by the author among white voters in various English cities in 1978 and 1979 only 10% of respondents answered 'a good deal' to the same question and a further 29% said 'a fair amount'.

The present troubles of the Labour Party may perhaps prove themselves reparable before the next general election, but it must be recognised that the current depth of its unpopularity as an opposition party is unprecedented; even in October 1960, at the height of the unilateral disarmament divisions, it was supported by 37% of the electorate against a still popular Tory government. On the Tory side, Mrs Thatcher may do some sort of U-turn, there may be an attempt temporarily to reflate the economy before the next election (perhaps paid for by what is left of North Sea oil), or Mrs Thatcher may disappear in a genteel *coup d'état* inside the Tory party. However, even were any of this to happen, one wonders how effective it would be in reclaiming lost support. The Tories may now be perceived by the electorate to have done just too much wilful damage to the economy to be allowed to recover their earlier electoral preeminence.

The fundamental fact about the British electorate is that its major positive expectation of any government is the appearance of competence, particularly (though not exclusively) competence in such specific economic areas as maintenance of real wages. Among the large body of voters whose political interest is minimal there is little concern about the means that produce success on this criterion. It seems unexceptionable that Mrs Thatcher would be riding high in the polls if monetarism, though producing unemployment for 11% of the labour force, had given a cornucopia to everybody else. It is the combination of unacceptably high unemployment and the failure to maintain real wages that has cost the Conservatives such amounts of popular support during 1981. And the record of the 1974-79 Labour government was not one of consummate skill and success. The 1976 sterling crisis; the general decline in the value of sterling; the cut in living standards from late 1976 to late 1977; the reduction in public expenditure; the exposure of the dubiousness of its claim to any special competence in relations with the trade unions after the conflicts over pay policy in late 1978 and early 1979; the hobbling along in Parliament with a permanently precarious majority: these factors all affected the general reputation of Labour governments for competence and capability. In fact, since the mid-1960s economic problems have simply become too intractable for successful management and hence there is a constant and indeed growing core of dissatisfied and volatile voters.

**A political Santa Claus**

The SDP may therefore burn itself out but only after its own incompetence has been painfully and expensively demonstrated by a period in government where it has to put its practice where its mouth is. The lack of deep political appreciation among most SDP supporters means that, despite their diverse 'Poujadist rabble' character, the party's apparent novelty may permit the short term denial of almost any number of evidences of incompetence and of lack of clarity on policies. Only failure in the arena of actual government will reveal its weaknesses and vapidity; thus, its much vaunted lack of coherent policies — something frequently adduced by supporters of both traditional parties to predict the SDP's demise — may be fatal in the long term but may be less destructive over a shorter or medium term period.

In September 1897 an eight-year-old girl wrote in distressed terms to the *New York Sun* seeking an editorial denial of the heresy circulating among some of her friends that there was no Santa Claus. The *Sun's* response was one of the most famous in American newspaper history: 'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus', it said and proceeded to deride the scepticism of a sceptical age. In present political circumstances, when both major parties have shown them-

[7] James Alt *et al*, 'Angels in Plastic: The Liberal Surge in 1974', *Political Studies*, XXV (September 1977), pp 343-368.

[8] Hilde T Himmelweit *et al*, *How Voters Decide: A Longitudinal Study of Political Attitudes and Voting Extending Over Fifteen Years* (London: Academic Press, 1981), pp 157-175.

[9] These poll data were collected by NOP Market Research Limited and their findings have been made available to me on the basis described in Footnote 1.

[10] David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain: The Evolution of Electoral Choice* 2nd ed; London: Macmillan, 1974, p 451.

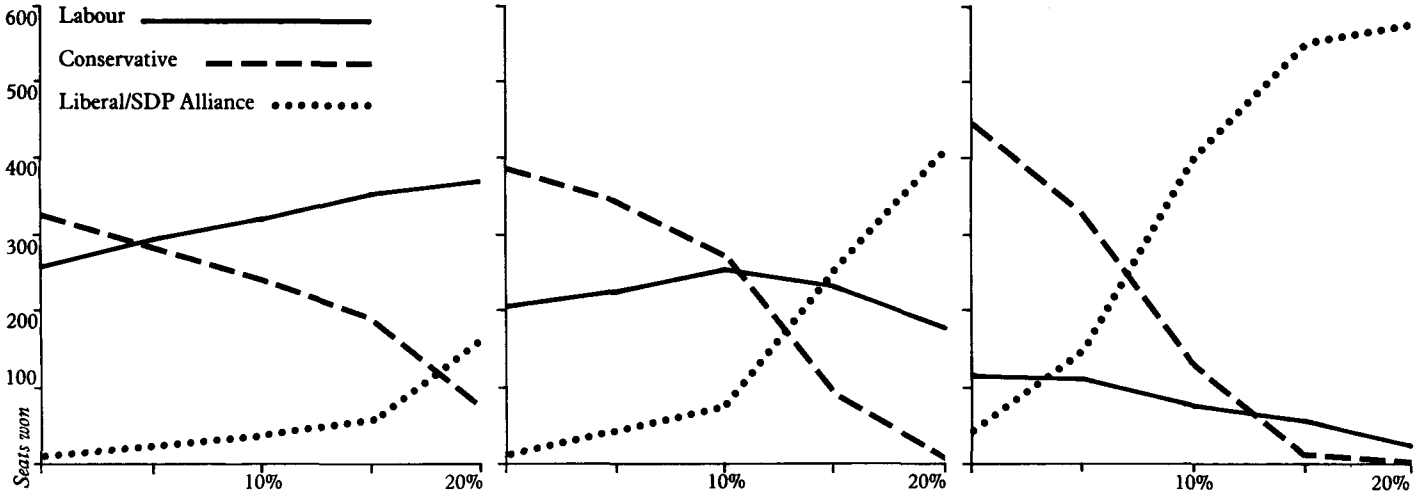
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**How 602 Parliamentary seats might be distributed,**
if Tory losses to the Alliance were the percentages shown on the bottom axis, and if:

**A** Labour's '79 percentage was unchanged in each seat

**B** the Alliance gained 10% from Labour's '79 percentage in each seat

**C** the Alliance gained 20% from Labour's '79 percentage in each seat




The calculations assume that net changes between Tory and Labour are nil

selves incapable of managing a capitalist economy over a length of time with any reasonable success, there are numerous voters who wish or hope that there is a political Santa Claus. Of course, there is not. Harsh economic realities must be faced over the next decade and yet meaningful debates about future alternatives to Thatcherism are certainly not taking place inside the Liberal/SDP Alliance, whose actions if in office would doubtless show themselves as inefficacious as those of their predecessors. 'Alternative Economic Strategy' is not part of the vocabulary of those many voters who — confused, uncertain and profoundly nervous at the prospect of any 'left' solution — are attracted to any other apparently reasonable alternative.

## POSSIBILITIES AFTER THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION

Finally, it is worth considering briefly just what might be the outcome in parliamentary terms of a general election fought with the intervention of an electorally significant Liberal/SDP Alliance against politically enervated Labour and Conservative Parties. The accompanying graphs present an approximation of what the distributional outcomes might be among 602 of the current 635 parliamentary constituencies in the United Kingdom.[11] Of course, the next general election is likely to be fought on drastically revised boundaries and it is far from clear how such redistricting might affect the figures of seats won, although it will not to benefit Labour. The 602 seats exclude those in Northern Ireland, the Speaker's seat of Cardiff West, and all those where a candidate other than Conservative, Labour or Liberal was first or second in May 1979.

> The SDP may therefore burn itself out but only after its own incompetence has been painfully and expensively demonstrated

The situation that most approximates the end of 1981 is that where there is a 20% Conservative loss in the central graph. In fact, if the standings of the major parties and the Alliance (Liberal and SDP combined), as reported in the November 1981 Gallup Poll and compared with the May 1979 results, were replicated among the 602 seats in the analysis, the outcome would be: Alliance, 348; Labour, 234; and Conservatives, 20. A slightly different estimate, calculating on the basis of separate recent poll data first in England and Wales and then in Scotland, would give the distribution: Alliance, 342; Labour, 239; and Conservatives, 21. The major reason for the special vulnerability of the Conservatives to a large scale and widespread Alliance surge is that, though Conservative majorities are on average only slightly less than are Labour ones, as many as 80 Conservative seats were won against Liberal runners-up in May 1979. Labour has only two such seats: Bethnal Green and Bow and Greenock and Port Glasgow, the latter being the seat of the SDP defector, Dr Dickson Mabon.

These anticipations of the possible distribution of parliamentary seats are not entirely an academic exercise but may have some bearing on the current imbroglio within the Labour Party. If Labour were to lose, say 10% from its 1979 percentages relatively uniformly across all constituencies and if the Conservatives recovered a little to lose 12 or 13% in similar manner, the outcome could be a minority Labour group as the largest single party; clearly, this outcome might be very different with a few percentage shifts in one or the other direction and redistricting complicates the issue, as does the possibility of successful Nationalists and the certainty of a phalanx of Northern Ireland Unionists. Even so, a minority Labour group could indeed become the largest political faction. Such an outcome would produce unprecedented constitutional wrangling and a Labour Party in such a position (almost certainly dominated by right wingers) would probably woo the Alliance for support. Thus, the current concern on the Left of the Labour Party about the purge of its activists may be paranoia but equally it is based on a recognition of what may be the only currently viable strategy for the party's right wing if it is to survive.

The prognoses are depressing from just about every left perspective. History seldom simply repeats itself in cyclical fashion but one cannot help thinking nervously of parallels with the minority Labour administration of 1929-31. □

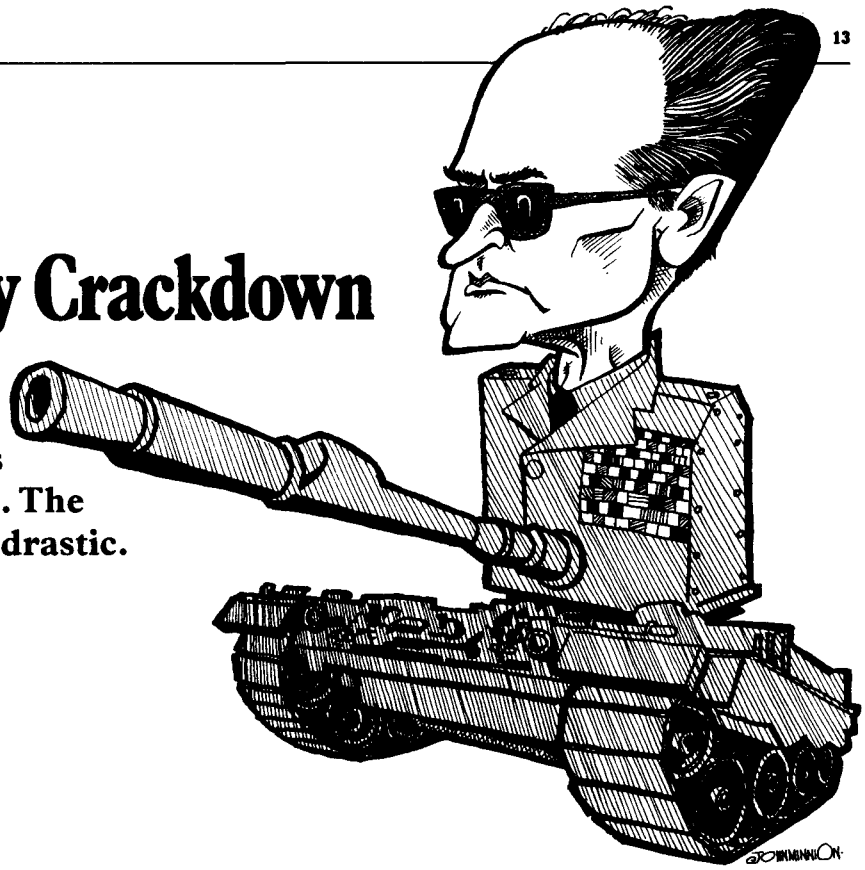
[11] I am grateful to the SSRC Survey Archive at the University of Essex for making available to me the constituency-level election data upon which the calculations have been based.

The calculations have been done on the basis of straight absolute percentage gains and losses of votes by the respective parties since the May 1979 result. Clearly, there are some considerable approximations in this analysis and some strong assumptions.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Monty Johnstone

# Poland's Military Crackdown



**The military have taken power in Poland. Never before has this happened in a socialist country. The implications for the Left are drastic.**

The assumption of power on December 13 by General Jaruzelski and his Military Council of National Salvation brutally ended the process of democratic socialist renewal initiated by the workers' struggles of August 1980 and approved by the Polish United Workers' Party congress last summer.

For the first time since December 1970, the Polish army has shed the blood of Polish workers. Trade union activities and democratic rights have been suspended. Free movement and communications are restricted. Thousands of members of a legal trade union, Solidarity, are held prisoner without trial; others are threatened with dismissal from their jobs if they refuse to sign a document renouncing the union. Tens of thousands have been charged under martial law regulations, especially for exercising the right to strike; some have already been sentenced to years of imprisonment on this count. Once again hopes of seeing a combination of socialism and democracy have been cruelly dashed as they were in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 with the military intervention there. Predictably all this has played into the hands of Reagan, Thatcher and the imperialist forces who are using it not only hypocritically to attack socialism, but also to undermine détente.

At the time of writing (January 14) we do not know how long or in what form the 'state of war', in force for the last month, will continue. What has however been made abundantly clear is that Poland's military rulers only envisage making relaxations to the extent that they feel that they have crushed all effective opposition and 'normalised' the country. Moreover, whatever role may again be played by the Polish United Workers' Party — at present totally overshadowed by the military — or representative institutions — whose activities are officially suspended — the power of the army, which was already increasing before December 13, is liable to remain decisive.

Spokesmen for the Military Council allege that the declaration of martial law was necessary to forestall a counter-revolutionary coup and prevent civil war. No evidence is adduced for this claim, which is in fact totally at variance with the actual state of affairs prevailing in the country. Solidarity, at its congress in the autumn and in subsequent negotiations with the government, had increasingly pressed for free contested elections, enabling 'all political parties, social organisations and groups of citizens freely to put forward candidates'.[1] With the great majority of the population supporting Solidarity and expressing lack of confidence in the PUWP, such elections would have been able to usher in the democratic changes desired by Solidarity. For Solidarity to have chosen under such circumstances to have organised a coup would have been utterly senseless. Indeed it is contradicted by a recent report in the PUWP daily, *Trybuna Ludu*, which spoke of the Solidarity National Commission meeting in Gdansk of December 12, the day before the proclamation of martial law, being preoccupied with items to be included in a national Solidarity referendum, a new electoral law and the making up of electoral lists.[2] Talk of the possibility of a new provisional government — however ill-considered — was clearly related to this rather than to plans for a coup. However the proximity of the local elections, due this February, and the fear of their outcome was no doubt an important factor in producing the only coup that actually took place — that of the generals on December 13, which appears to have secured the postponement of the elections.

The meeting of Walesa, Archbishop Glemp and General Jaruzelski opened up the prospect of a historical compromise between Solidarity, the Catholic Church, the government and the PUWP, which was the only possible basis for solving Poland's problems.[3] Such an agreement, though requiring prolonged and difficult negotiations, was possible, but only if the Party had been prepared to relax its privileged positions of control over the state, industry and the media and make genuine concessions to Solidarity commensurate with the support given to it by the majority of Polish society. It is now clear that entrenched forces, backed by the Soviet leadership, were determined to block such concessions whatever the cost. Quite understandably, Solidarity was not ready to make the concessions entailed in entering the Front of National Accord proposed by the Party on the latter's terms with nothing of substance in return.

## Breaking Solidarity

The decision of the Party's Central Committee at the end of November to

1 Solidarity's Programme Resolution, Thesis 22/2, in BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, Part 2 (Eastern Europe), 30 October 1981.

2 *Morning Star*, 14 January 1982.

3 For a fuller analysis, see M Johnstone and A Westphal, 'The Polish Crisis: is there a way out?', *Marxism Today*, January 1982, pp 14-21.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ask the Sejm (Parliament) to suspend the right to strike effectively made such co-operation impossible. It came at a time when, following substantial efforts by Walesa in particular, there were no industrial workers on strike. However it is hardly surprising that Solidarity would not agree to the suspension of one of the most important rights recognised the previous year in the Gdansk Agreement. Moreover it was a fact that far more production was lost through shortages of spare parts and raw materials than through strikes, which according to official statistics had averaged only approximately one hour per Solidarity member during the previous year.

**'If the workers had protested several years earlier, we wouldn't be in such a catastrophic economic mess. That's why the workers themselves bear direct responsibility for the country's present situation.'**
(Andrzej Krauze, *Kultura*)

From then on the situation escalated, with the government on December 2 using force to end the sit-in by fire brigade cadets in Warsaw. The harder line from the Party and government strengthened the hand of the extremist forces in Solidarity, hitherto a minority, and forced Walesa to make concessions to them. This was the background to the meeting of the Solidarity leadership in Radom on December 3, of which edited tape recordings were broadcast with Walesa himself speaking in terms of confrontation. 'Radicals' like Bujak and Rulewski were heard talking of the need to organise workers' defence guards. This was however in a defensive not an offensive context — and one which, after December 13, was by no means to have shown itself to be so fanciful.

The military take-over, on the night of December 12-13, was said in the Polish press to have been occasioned by the decision of the Solidarity leadership, which had just been meeting in Gdansk, to organise a day of protest on December 17 'against the use of force in solving social conflicts'. (It has even been alleged that that was the day fixed for the 'counter-revolutionary coup'.) However the comprehensive and detailed nature of the martial law regulations immediately broadcast and posted up suggest that they had already been prepared well in advance.

The prime purpose of the proclamation of the 'state of war' was to break the back of Solidarity, which embraced 9½ of the 12¾ million Polish workers, as a genuinely independent force. At the same time it was hoped to preserve Solidarity as an organisation with its wings clipped and its leadership purged performing strictly circumscribed functions not dissimilar to those undertaken before August 1980 by the former PUWP-controlled trade unions.

To this end the co-operation of Lech Walesa, with his great national and international standing, appears to have been counted on. Here, however, there was a serious miscalculation, for Walesa has refused such co-operation and insisted that he will only speak to Poland's military rulers if he is joined by his colleagues in the Solidarity Presidium, most of whom have been interned. Nor has any other national Solidarity leader agreed to such co-operation. All reports indicate that, after the initial protest actions of industrial workers in a number of parts of the country, the mood is now one of sullen resentment from all the main sections of the population.

### A dangerous new trend

The subordination of the Party to the military constitutes a new and dangerous phenomenon in a socialist state and makes a mockery of the talk of asserting the leading role of the Party, however this may be conceived. A month after the coup, there has been no meeting of the Party's Central Committee. The last one was held on November 27-28, and was concerned with approving proposals to be put to the meeting of the Sejm due to convene on December 15 (but subsequently cancelled by the coup). Hence it can safely be said that the decision to establish military rule was taken by Jaruzelski and a small group of leaders (mainly or exclusively in the armed forces) behind the back of the collective leadership of the Party. If, as is now suggested, a Central Committee meeting will soon be called, it will be confronted by an accomplished fact which it will be asked to approve. It will also be presented with the results of a purge now underway in the Party but which it has had no part in initiating. The Sejm itself, if it meets later this month, will likewise be faced with the consolidated power of the military.

This situation contains the elements of military rule of a Bonapartist type, classically analysed by Marx in his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. He showed the tendency of the military, after having been extolled as the guardians of the existing order in a time of social unrest, eventually to 'hit upon the idea of rather saving society once and for all' and proclaiming a 'state of siege in their own interest and for their own benefit'.[4]

In Poland, which experienced the Bonapartist rule established by Marshal Pilsudski's coup in 1926, the army enjoyed very considerable prestige, as against the unpopularity of the PUWP. Moreover its efficient organisation contrasted with the ineffectiveness of the Party and with other branches of the state administration. We are already finding lipservice paid to the importance of the Party as an ideological and political force in society, and this will probably be emphasised more strongly. However the situation created by the December 13 coup is incompatible with any genuine increase in the Party's influence, which demands quite different conditions, so in practice the military are likely to remain *de facto* if not *de jure*, the dominant force in society for a considerable time. Such a situation is ideologically embarrassing for the Soviet leadership, which will however no doubt continue to give its blessing and support, since its overriding concern is for a strong leadership to hold Poland under firm control.

However, despite this support, which has already expressed itself in increased Soviet credits, reliable reports indicate that Poland's economic situation has deteriorated since December 13. The only aspect of the economic reform, which was due to come into operation from January 1, that is now being carried into effect is a reform of the price structure, in the shape of the quadrupling and even quintupling of the prices of important basic commodities and services.

### Back to the monolithic state

General Jaruzelski and his administration speak of continuing the course of reform, but no more credence can be given to this than to similar declarations of intent to continue the 'January course' of democratic reform in Czechoslovakia after August 1968. The fact is that the whole operation is aimed at controlling, disciplining or suppressing the pluralistic structures and organisations that have developed in the last eighteen months. This has been made very clear by Jerzy Urbanski, head

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Party Control Commission, who recently denounced political pluralism as a 'bourgeois concept'.[5]

Yet it was precisely the absence of political pluralism that was responsible for the repeated moves into the concentration and abuse of power that have characterised post-war Poland, as well as other socialist countries. Urbanski and his colleagues have indicated their intention, after martial law is repealed (and indeed as a condition for its repeal), of 'ruthlessly eliminating' from political life all 'opponents of our system'.[5]

Once again all social and political organisations will be subordinated to control from a single unchallengable and irremovable centre, albeit this centre may this time be army-dominated. People will once again be able to vote in elections — but only for a single approved list of candidates. Solidarity may even reappear legally on a ticket of good behaviour — if more of its members can be pressurised into repudiating it or signing loyalty pledges.

The paternalistic arrogance of the new regime is shown by the practised journalist, Wieslaw Gornicki, who donning a captain's uniform, has become a leading advisor to, and spokesman for, General Jaruzelski. Visiting Copenhagen to attend a meeting of the World Peace Council, he told a press conference there on January 6 that Walesa might once again be permitted to become a trade union leader, but was too uneducated to be allowed to play any part in politics! What kind of workers' state is it where the workers are only allowed to choose leaders who have been duly issued with certificates of educational adequacy by military leaders and establishment intellectuals?

**Historical differences**

The military coup in Poland and the differing reactions to it in the international Communist movement indicate, as in the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968, fundamentally different conceptions of socialism and its democratic content. This is not a new phenomenon. Already in Marx' and Engels' day there existed among Communists the two conceptions of socialism that we see today: the revolutionary-democratic and the paternalistic-monolithic, which has now acquired a new (but internally consistent) twist in associating itself with military rule. The League of Communists, which Marx and Engels joined in 1847, stressed that its members were 'not among those Communists who are out to destroy personal liberty, who wish to turn the world into one huge barrack or a gigantic workhouse'. In a declaration of policy in September 1847 they declared: 'There certainly are some Communists who, with an easy conscience, refuse to countenance personal liberty and would like to shuffle it out of the world because they consider it is a hindrance to complete harmony . . . We are convinced . . . that in no social order will personal freedom be so assured as in a society based upon communal ownership', in which 'each party would be able by word or in writing to win a majority over to its ideas.'[6]

4 K Marx/F Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow/London, 1950), p 239.

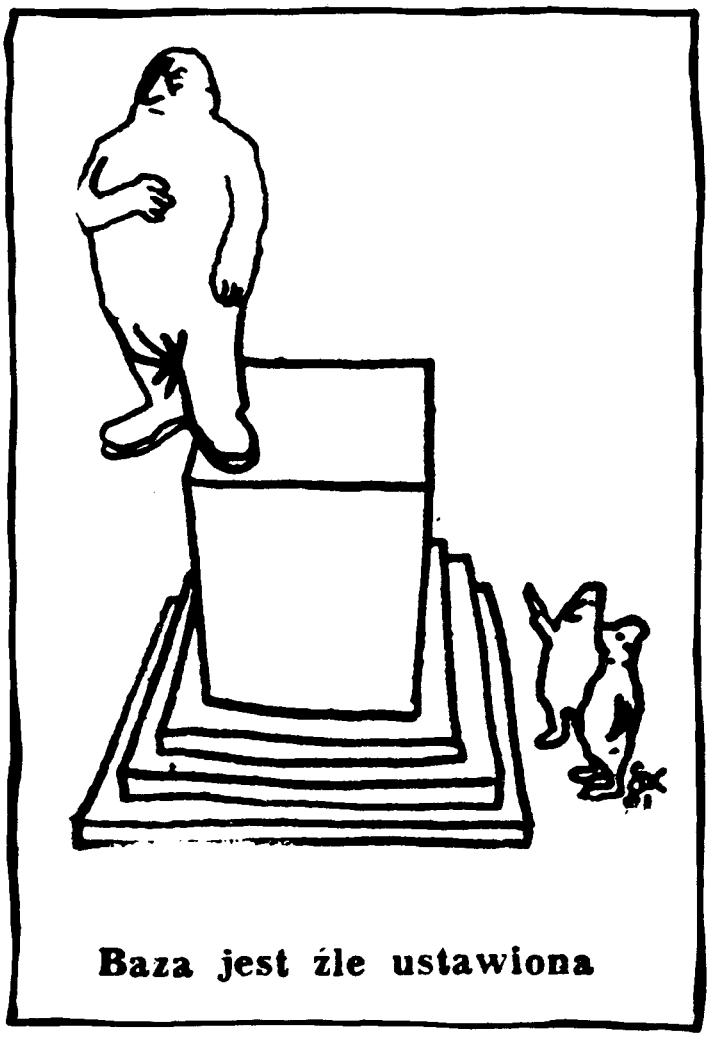
5 *Guardian*, 13 January 1982.

6 D Ryazanoff, Editor, *The Communist Manifesto of K Marx and F Engels* (London, 1930), Appendix E, p 292.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was from this position that Marx and Engels consistently criticised the ideas of the French revolutionary Blanqui, who argued that it was necessary for an enlightened revolutionary minority to take and hold power on behalf of the working people until they could be taught to understand where their best interests lay. In contrast to this, Marx and Engels relied 'for the ultimate triumph of the ideas set forth in the *(Communist) Manifesto* solely and exclusively upon the intellectual development of the working class, as it necessarily had to ensue from united action and discussion.[7]

Lenin repeatedly rejected Blanquism and the Russian October Revolution was genuinely democratic in inspiration and intent. Subsequently however power was concentrated in the hands of a minority, which considered it had a historical right to enforce its will on the majority of the population.




**'The base is badly placed'**
(Szymon Kobylinski, *Polityka*)

The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 showed how, under Stalin, this led to mass repression and arbitrary rule. This came as a terrible shock to Communists throughout the world who had assumed that such things were impossible in a socialist country, in which capitalism and landlordism had been replaced by the social ownership of the means of production. The explanation of what went wrong in terms of the cult of Stalin's personality blocked a proper Marxist analysis. On the one hand it obscured an investigation into the structure of power and social relationships, of which the Stalin cult was only one expression. On the other, it encouraged acceptance of the Soviet claim that, with Stalin gone and collective leadership re-established, the whole problem belonged to the past.

The last quarter of a century has shown that the tendency towards the concentration of power is present, to a greater or lesser degree, in every socialist country. Its damaging effects on all spheres of life, including the economy, have been periodically revealed.

**Are the possibilities now closed?**

The two major attempts to carry through thoroughgoing democratisation, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Poland in 1980-81, have been brutally crushed. The first by direct outside military intervention by Soviet and other Warsaw Pact armies; the second by internal armed forces enjoying outside backing from the same quarters.

Earlier assumptions that the example of socialist democracy and economic prosperity predicted in the socialist countries would strengthen the appeal of socialism in the West have proved totally untenable. The overall effect of these countries has been rather the reverse, notwithstanding their many positive features compared with capitalism.

Moreover the problem is now posed with particular force: what chances do these countries have for democratic socialist renewal? Is it inevitable that all attempts at this will end as tragically as they did in Czechoslovakia and Poland? The conviction that the Soviet leaders, directly or indirectly, will make sure that this is so is very widespread in Eastern Europe now, and can only serve to discourage such attempts in the future. Yet the absence of democratic structures can only conflict with the needs of socialist development and contribute to the accumulation and aggravation of problems and dissatisfactions in all these countries — including the Soviet Union itself. It must inevitably bring the recurrence in one form or another of the dramatic crises that we have seen in so many socialist countries.

If, following the Russian Revolution of October 1917, the main revolutionary influence came from the East, that is no longer the position in the world today. As Enrico Berlinguer, general secretary of the Italian Communist Party has argued, for 'a new period of democratic renewal and development' in Eastern Europe, 'two conditions are necessary: the reduction of international tension and the emergence in the West of a new socialism founded on the principles of freedom and democracy.'

Urging the immediate release of all detained trade unionists in Poland along with the restoration of democratic rights and civilian rule, the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain has emphasised the need for the combination of socialism and democracy, seen as a universal principle. The Polish experience creates the need for a deeper analysis of the causes of the violations and limitations of this principle to be sought not in conjunctural phenomena but in the structures of power prevailing in most socialist countries in the world today. □

7 K Marx/F Engels, *op cit*, p 30.

**The World On Our Backs**
**The Kent Miners and the 1972 Miners' Strike**
**Malcolm Pitt**
*'the most readable and passionate trade union history ever written'*
Hwyel Francis, co-author of *The Fed*
*'A fine example of what labour history would be if more of it were written by workers, and a valuable contribution to history "in our time"'*
History Workshop
*paperback £2.95*
Lawrence & Wishart
39 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LQ

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vic Allen

# The Miners on the Move

**Even the Thatcher government has bowed before the miners. But it has not always been the same. Until the 70s, the miners were on the defensive. So what has changed?**

During the last decade the National Union of Mineworkers has established itself as the most politically potent union in Britain. This is not because its industrial power is greater than any other union. Electrical power workers could have a more immediate impact upon power supplies than miners but they are not high in the ratings. Water workers or gas supply workers could cause immediate industrial and social disruption if they exercised their collective power but neither of these groups is influential either in the trade union movement or the wider political scene. The explanation lies partly, of course, in the actual industrial power miners wield but also in the determination with which they collectively use their industrial strength and in the solidarity which their actions evoke from other groups of workers.

The influence of miners stems also from the perception which the government, political parties and other unions have of them. This perception is rooted in the actual behaviour of miners but it has an element of mythology about it. The miners struck with frightening determination in 1972 against all odds but that was their first national official strike since 1926 when they were painfully defeated. And although their propensity to strike had been the highest amongst industrial workers in Britain that was no longer the case. In 1956 as many as 78.4% of all strikes in Great Britain occurred in mining but by 1970 this figure had fallen to 41%. The post First World War history of miners was characterised by the extraordinary solidarity in 1926 but even more by fractured unity, industrial defeat, collaboration with private employers, the National Coal Board and governments, and demoralisation following the dramatic contraction of the industry in the 1960s which reduced the numbers of miners from more than 700,000 in 1956 to 296,000 in 1970. There was little in this history to support the mythology about miners' solidarity. Even when their propensity to strike was at its height their strikes were largely confined to single collieries and were over parochial wage issues.

## A new paranoia

Notwithstanding the reality of miners' experiences the image of a powerful collective presence persisted. There was always something awe-inspiring about miners' actions. Then in 1972 the myth came to life when the miners took the government on in a wages confrontation and shattered its n-1 incomes policy in a seven week strike.

There were many examples following 1972 of the sensitivity of governments to the changing collective mood of miners. The government of Mr Edward Heath which had conceded defeat in 1972 reacted with virtual hysteria in November 1973 when the NUM imposed an overtime ban. A state of emergency was declared the day following the imposition of the ban and a three day working week was enforced by law creating industrial chaos and social consequences far greater than a strike could have done. There was no objective basis for such a reaction for, after all, the miners had simply decided to work a normal week. The strike in 1974, which followed yet another overtime ban and propelled the Prime Minister into a general election which he lost to the Labour Party, consolidated the fear which governments had of the miners. The Social Contract was designed by the 1974 Labour government to contain the miners' wage demands; wage incentive schemes were reintroduced in 1978 as a means of breaking the miners' unity. Then, in February, 1981, the present Conservative government responded to a partial, unofficial miners' strike against pit closures by agreeing to meet the strikers' demands. This response contained all the elements of hysteria which had marked Heath's behaviour in 1973. It was unexpected, dramatic, an unashamed reversal of policy for the benefit of miners only. It was as if Mrs Thatcher had suddenly recognized the route which Mr Heath had followed in 1974.

## A further confrontation?

The apprehension with which governments have viewed confrontation with miners makes the present developing confrontation difficult to understand. The government could be excused for not anticipating the pit closure strike last February because miners had given no sign of militancy over that issue. Indeed the evidence pointed towards the NUM being compliant. But during the autumn of 1981 the government and miners snowballed into confrontation position. At any time during October and November the parties could have stopped, dusted themselves down and sorted out their differences. The miners were demanding a minimum wage of £100 a week, amounting to a 25% wage increase compared with the 4% public sector norm insisted on by the government. Between those two limits there was undoubtedly a price at which confrontation could have been dissipated.

Both the government and National Coal Board relied on the NUM president, Joe Gormley, to handle the issue in their interest. Gormley made it clear that he thought the wage claim was excessive and that he did not intend to leave office as he came in, with a major strike on his hands. His timing of the negotiations and his handling of the union's National Executive Committee were vital, therefore, in this 'avoidance of confrontation' process.

It is often believed that there is a pecking

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

order in the annual struggle for wage increases. Namely, that the first major union to make its demand sets a ceiling for the remaining claims. If the NUM were prompt in submitting its claim and anxious for a settlement by its customary date of 1 November then it would be likely to be a 'price-leader'. Gormley did not want the miners to make the pace. It so happened that the British Leyland workers had submitted an early wages claim so Gormley prolonged the negotiations with the NCB and made no attempt to settle by 1 November. It was also the government's immediate interest to separate the settlements and to deal with the fractured British Leyland workers first.

The British Leyland workers settled their wages claim in disarray and in a manner satisfactory to both the management and government. The miners' claim, it was then felt, could be processed without complications. The delay, however, took the negotiations into the campaigning period for the election of the NUM president. The final date for nominations for the election was 2 November; the ballot was to be held on the 2, 3 and 4 of December with the result scheduled to be announced on Thursday, 10 December.

The National Coal Board had offered an increase of just less than 8% on the basic rate in response to the union's demand. This was rejected by the union NEC at its meeting on 12 November but it decided to resume negotiations on 25 November. At this meeting the Board's offer included an increase of £1 on the bonus rate and amounted to 8.47% for surface workers and 8.99% for face workers. The union negotiators rejected this offer too but agreed to a meeting between the full NEC and Board representatives on 8 December, after the ballot vote for the president had been completed. Gormley did not want the crucial stages of the wages negotiations to coincide with the final stages of the election campaign with the possibility of having to hold two ballots simultaneously. It was preferable he believed, to get the election over first and the NEC agreed with him. The NCB rejigged its offer up to 9.1% for the meeting on 8 December but it was rejected by a 3 to 1 majority. The NEC then decided to convene a delegate conference to debate the issue on Friday, 18 December and to hold a strike ballot during the middle of January 1982.

> The media identified him with Tony Benn and engaged in a joint character-assassination

The carefully drawn-out negotiations could not isolate the wages issue from either the implications of the British Leyland settlement or the election campaign. The British Leyland settlement was portrayed by some miners' leaders as a defeat caused by division and collaboration. It was projected by Arthur Scargill as an example of weakness. The miners' wage issue was affected by the election campaign in a much more profound way.

**The Scargill campaign**

The presidential election campaign started as soon as it was announced publicly, more than 18 months ago, that Arthur Scargill was to be the sole left wing candidate for Gormley's post. The Scottish miners president, Michael McGahey, made the announcement and immediately initiated a coalfield election campaign with Scargill's active participation. From that moment Scargill moved around the left wing coalfields addressing meetings and visiting miners' clubs. He knew that in order to win he had to maximise his vote in the traditionally sympathetic coalfields. Later in 1980 Scargill began addressing meetings in Durham and Nottingham. By the time the election was held he had spoken in all the areas


# ANTI-REPORT 1981

## CIS on Britain Under the Tories

*'A highly readable, brilliantly illustrated devastating chronicle... Essential facts and figures are presented very clearly'*

**Labour Research**

**Available from CIS, 9 Poland Street, London W1**
**Price £1.95, plus 25p p&p**

# THE MILITANCY OF BRITISH MINERS

**by V. L. ALLEN**

| | |
|---|---|
| 337 pages | 57 illustrations |
| Paperback £5.00 | Hardback £12.00 |
| ISBN 0907698 018 | ISBN 0907698 00 X |

**". . . a graphic indispensible description of the onward march of the N.U.M. broad left . . ."**
*New Society.*

**"This invaluable and authoritative history."**
*Morning Star*

**"an indepth analysis of the rising motivation of miners . . ."**
*Yorkshire Post.*

**This . . . book should help in strengthening militancy in the Labour and trade union movement . . ."**
*Will Paynter, Tribune.*

Order through your libraries, usual booksellers, trade union branches, or direct to The Moor Press, Bank House, Baildon Green, Shipley, BD17 5JA., enclosing £1 for postage and packing.


PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the union except for a couple of small ones. Wherever he went he spoke to mass meetings. Miners clamoured to hear him. No miner in Britain was unaware of his presence, his personality and the policies for which he stood.

The mass media portrayed the election as a competition between personalities with differing, contrasting political styles and policies. Scargill was the political extremist, strike-happy and irresponsible. The media identified him with Tony Benn and engaged in a joint character-assassination. In contrast his electoral opponents were moderate, reasonable, sensible and trust-worthy men, standing in the spectrum of trade union policies very much as Denis Healey stood in the Labour Party.

**The campaign and the mining issues**

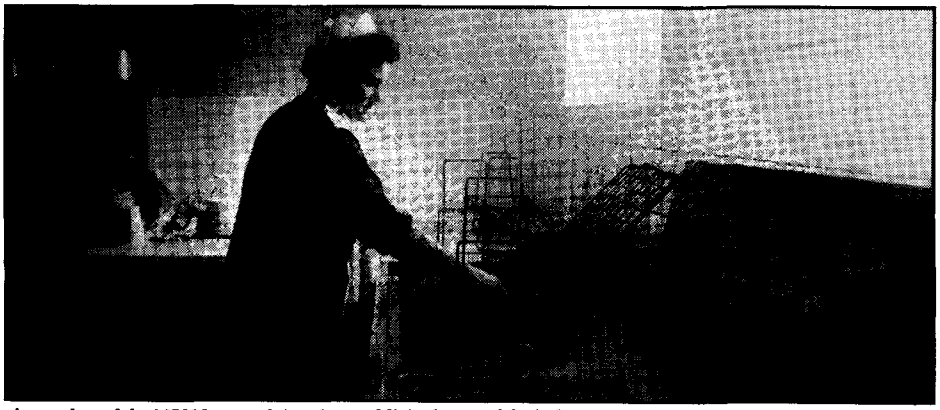
But the media presentation was not as it was seen by working miners. Scargill stood consistently for policies which related to mining conditions. Whenever and wherever he spoke he enunciated these policies, emphasising them differently as circumstances varied, but always projecting what he thought needed achieving. The election issue of *The Yorkshire Miner* listed Scargill's main demands as follows:

'No pit closures other than on the grounds of exhaustion'
'A minimum of £100.00 a week wages'
'A four day week'
'Retirement at 55 on full pay for all mineworkers'
'Wage protection so that a man who's downgraded doesn't suffer a drop in pay'
'Controls on imports of coal and oil so that we can burn our own coal'
'Realistic subsidies for our industry. In Britain we get £2.00 a tonne while the West Germans get £40.00 a tonne'
'Democracy within the union so that conference decisions *are* carried out'
'An efficient day-to-day union that deals promptly with all the bread and butter issues that never hit the headlines'

The core policies concerned wages, hours, retirement and wage protection and centrally placed within these was the wages issue. Scargill's campaign then, which intruded into the right wing areas of Durham, Nottingham, North Wales and the Midlands where campaigning was rarely practised, was, in effect a wages one. Scargill's view about wages was conveyed to miners in his pamphlet *Miners in the Eighties* and later in his election address, both of which had mass circulations.

Even some of the leaders in the left wing areas of the NUM failed to see the political significance of Scargill's campaign until it became obvious. Early in November they stated that there was little interest in the pits for a wages struggle. By the end of that month they exclaimed with some surprise that a transformation had taken place in the attitude of miners. Gormley was compelled to reassess his view about what the miners would be prepared to accept by the rank and file expression of dissatisfaction. The officials of the right wing areas reflected the emerging militancy by voting for a strike ballot.

None of these officials ought to have been surprised at the consequences of Scargill's electioneering for they had followed a similar, though less spectacular, campaign in 1968 when Lawrence Daly beat Joe Gormley in an election for the general secretaryship. Daly, like Scargill, campaigned over policies and set in motion a mood which led to the unofficial strikes in 1969 and 1970 and the national official strike in 1972. Lawrence Daly never had access to the right wing areas as Scargill has had, yet his campaign caused miners in many coalfields to discuss their conditions and to question the conventional explanations given about them. All that followed in the 1970s, including the political transformation in Yorkshire and Scargill's emergence as a national leader, owed something to Daly's election. It was during that election that Scargill made his first impact in the Yorkshire area as the organiser of the Barnsley Forum, a debating society addressed by all the leading left wing leaders in the industry.



*A member of the NUM at work in a less-publicised area of the industry.*

**Consciousness**

Consciousness raising does not proceed along a continuum, reflecting changes as more and more effort is contributed. The consciousness of people is the result of the interaction of politicising activities and actual experiences and it responds to changes in the relationship between these two elements. Intensive political activity may produce no tangible changes in the consciousness of workers whereas in other situations workers may suddenly, with little prompting, express a heightened awareness of their political position. Workers' consciousness, therefore, fluctuates, sometimes uncannily and seemingly unpredictably.

There is one thing, however, about which one can be sure. That is that an increased political awareness does not occur simply through changes in situations. The dominant ideology, which effectively depoliticises people through both encouraging an acceptance of deprivation and diverting attention from its structural causes, continues to dominate unless challenged by alternative analyses and explanations. The catalyst for a rising awareness is a sustained, cohesive, logically consistent and effectively disseminated alternative ideology which counters conventional explanations point by point and makes sense to the people concerned. Without this people will remain oppressed but with it they will not necessarily seek freedom for other conditions have to be present.

This statement about the nature of consciousness can be illustrated by the British miners' own experiences since the coal industry began to contract in the late 1950s. From then until the 1970s coalfields were ravaged by closures; the number of miners

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was halved in a decade; many moved to other coalfields; pit villages became deserted. Miners' relative wages declined and their working conditions deteriorated. Yet miners accepted the degrading consequences of pit closures as an inevitable consequence of the operation of market forces. Then, from Daly's election campaign which lasted as long as Scargill's an organised movement to politicise miners began. Pamphlets and leaflets were distributed throughout the coalfields presenting alternative political explanations for the causes of the problems miners faced. Meetings were held in miners' clubs organised by local Labour Parties, the Communist Party and miners' lodges at which miners were urged to emancipate themselves.

### The impact of leadership

A small coterie of miners gave this movement its initiative and resources. From Kent came Jack Dunn; from Scotland, Michael McGahey, Lawrence Daly and Bill McLean; from South Wales, Emlyn Williams and Dai Francis; and from Yorkshire, Jock Kane, Sammy Taylor and Arthur Scargill. As the movement made its impact so it widened its membership both within and among the coalfields. The material conditions of mining altered in the early 1970s. Unemployment increased, a severe fuel crisis occurred and widespread industrial action was used to oppose Heath's Conservative government. These changes undoubtedly made miners' protests more likely but they could not have occurred in their particularly victorious way without the organised ideological impact of Dunn, McGahey, Williams and the rest.

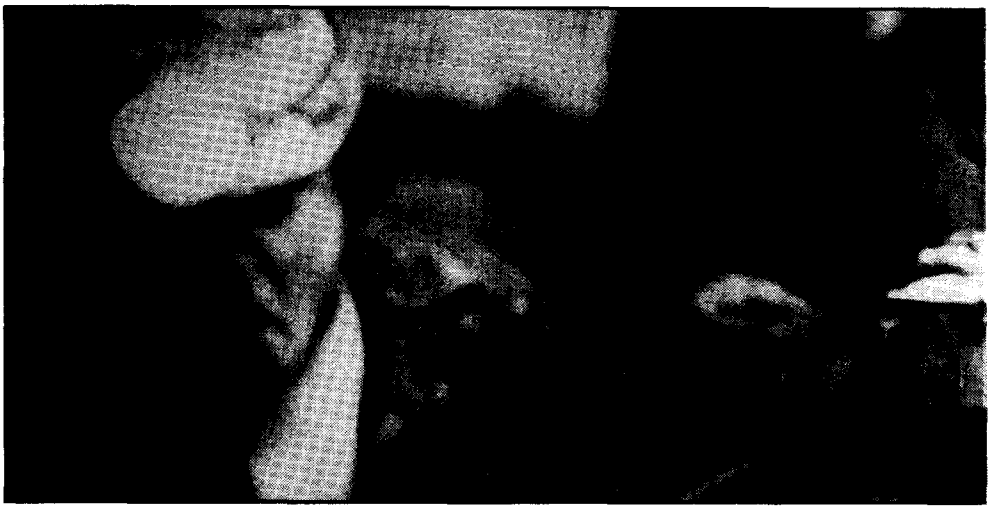
It could not have been foreseen in 1970 and 1971 that within three years the miners would take on the government twice and win each time. Nor, once the miners had retrieved their pride and achieved a position of political eminence in the labour movement after 1974, could it have been forecast that they would acquiesce for six years in policies which lowered their living standards or accept an accumulation of unfulfilled resolutions about wages and conditions of work in the mines, despite the intensification of politicising activities among them.

The combination of relevant variables altered in significant ways. A Labour government was elected in 1974 in circumstances which exposed and reinforced the traditional solidarity of miners for the Labour Party. Joe Gormley revealed after 1974 an incredible facility for interpreting and manipulating his union's rules to defeat the purpose of progressive policies. The day-wage system, introduced in 1966, which provided unity between the coalfields on the wages issue was replaced in 1978 by incentive schemes which divided miners. An intensive media campaign was directed against left wing miners, supporting any device to frustrate their intentions. The behaviour of miners was unpredictable in these changing circumstances.

Miners had not protested against pit closures in the 1960s nor did they effectively protest against them in the 1970s when their union policy was to accept closures only when caused by the exhaustion of coal reserves. Whenever a movement of protest against a closure was initiated, as in the cases of Langwith in Derbyshire and Teversal in Nottinghamshire, even the miners concerned opposed using industrial action. Then when in February 1980, the Executive of the South Wales Area decided to call a strike against possible widespread closures of Welsh pits, as many as 22,000 out of the 27,000 South Wales miners turned its recommendation down. Against this background the spontaneous strikes against closures in February 1981, which compelled the government to alter its policy and the National Coal Board to renounce its closure list, were unexpected. Of course there is an explanation but it is a *post-hoc* one concerning the continued left wing exposure of the visible injustice of closures caused by subsidised imports from the USA, South Africa and elsewhere.

### The immediate effects

The long term consequences of the Scargill election campaign cannot, then, be pinpointed with any accuracy. The immediate effects, however, are indisputable. Arthur Scargill was elected with an unprecedented majority over his three opponents. In an 80% poll he obtained 70.3% of the votes compared with 17.3% for his closest rival, Trevor Bell, 9.1% for Ray Chadburn, the president of the large Nottingham area and 3.3% for Bernard Donaghy from Lancashire. He achieved a majority in every coalfield. The result was announced during a break in the meeting between the full union NEC and National Coal Board representatives on 8 December instead of the scheduled day on 10 December. It clearly influenced the attitude of all NEC members to the Coal Board's offer when they resumed negotiations and helped to create a unanimous vote for a strike ballot later in the week.



The result gave a quality of euphoria to the Delegate Conference on 18 December which endorsed an Executive recommendation to strike, if necessary, in the New Year, by a majority of 109 votes to 3. The momentum it created is unlikely to be halted by an objective assessment of coal stocks which are high, coal imports or the government's picketing laws. Only the size of the wage offer can do that.

It has been commonly assumed that the return to piecework in 1978 destroyed the unity which the day wage system had created around wages. Indeed it is speculated that the guileful introduction of area incentive schemes at an initial great cost to the National Coal Board was aimed at breaking the unity which had characterised the 1972 and 1974 strikes. The basic rate in many instances has now become a fall-back rate. Actual average earnings ranged between £40.00 and £50.00 on top of the rate during 1981. But there is a wide disparity in earnings between coalfields and between pits within coalfields. In some areas there is growing dissatisfaction with incentives not simply because of low earnings but also because of the manner in which they are operated by management. The Doncaster miners, for instance, could readily rebel against the schemes.

The point is that there is no evidence that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

incentive schemes since 1978 have disrupted the unity of the miners or that they would do so in 1982. It is not necessary, however, for all miners to be directly implicated in a wages struggle in order to achieve solidarity. A widespread unofficial strike in 1969 was about the working hours of a minority of surface workers. This time the basis of the wages demand is a minimum wage for the lowest paid surface workers. Many underground workers anticipate ending their working lives as surface workers. They easily identify with them.

A strike would have intense political implications because of the facility of miners both to generate fear in politicians and inspiration in fellow trade unionists. All manner of grievances emerge during a strike and the general resentment against the government could be one of these. The picketing laws could be broken. Trade unions engaged in sympathetic action might prosecute their own grievances. There are various possible permutations, depending in large part on the reactions of the government, for at the present the extent and intensity of government intervention is the factor which gives industrial action its political characteristics. If the government itself suffered through a miners' strike it would be, as in the case of Heath's government, through its own incompetence and not because of the direct intentions of the miners. Irrespective of their dislike of the present government the miners are not trying to achieve political change; they are merely demanding a wage increase.

**The NUM**

The real question concerning miners is not whether they will strike in 1982 but whether they will achieve a political awareness which would lead them to shape their own destinies in and beyond the coal industry. Evidence of this quality of consciousness would be the manner in which miners linked their failure to obtain wage increases and to fulfil their own resolutions about working hours and conditions with the nature of British capitalism.

The all-important issue, then, is about the miners' perception of a worsening crisis in Britain and this depends not simply on worsening material conditions, but on discrediting the dominant ideology, for a system which cannot be legitimised in the minds of people cannot survive. Miners identify closely with their union. How it operates therefore and the purposes to which it is put have an important bearing on the miners' own perceptions. The future for miners unquestionably hinges on the extent and nature of democracy in the NUM and, in the process therefore, on the quality of leadership. The NUM leadership after 1974 provided no initiatives. Its task was the negative one of stifling action by sitting on negotiations, complicating issues, compromising to the point of defeat and generally avoiding action. It acted as a buffer.

The NUM is a difficult union to lead. It is not a centralised national union except in its constitution. In practice it is a federation with its various areas acting with the mentality of autonomous county unions, which they were until 1945. The areas possess their own considerable funds; they retain their own policy-making machinery. The decisions of the national union prevail on important industrial issues but areas can rebel and can use their own resources to oppose national policy. The transformation which occurred in the attitudes of miners in the 1970s did so because of the politicising activities of some areas. The composition of the National Executive Committee reflects these area differences for its members go to London as leaders of the South Wales, Scottish, Yorkshire, Derbyshire miners and not as representatives elected by a given proportion of members divided on geographical basis. They descend on London as plenipotentiaries. They are not, therefore, easily controlled. They cannot be browbeaten or imposed upon. They sit, moreover, on the basis of equality, for each member on the NEC has his own vote irrespective of his membership.

**The leftward shift**

The present NEC has a small majority which favours right wing policies and which sanctioned Gormley's activities. That majority is likely to disappear soon after Scargill takes office for there are always some members who prefer to be on the official side irrespective of its policies. In any event, changes are taking place in the right-wing areas. An indication of this is that so many of these areas supported Scargill in the election. But there is also a growing organised opposition to right wing policies and methods. It is a fact that the most democratic areas are the left wing ones for it is not possible to sustain left wing policies without sustained argument and membership participation. The officials of left wing areas have always had to campaign consistently amongst their own members. New, young branch officials in the right wing areas are demanding more discussion, a greater participation in the union affairs and a stricter

A strike would have intense political implications because of the facility of miners both to generate fear in politicians and inspiration in fellow trade unionists

accountability of their area officials. This process will result in a qualitative change in area leaderships. Durham, for instance, will change in much the same ways as Yorkshire changed in the early 1970s. The Midlands area and Nottingham will follow suit. During the 1980s there will be a left wing consensus on the NEC. But this will raise more tests or Scargill than it will remove.

**The Scargill presidency**

Joe Gormley had to contend with an intelligent, volatile minority. Scargill will have to cope with an intelligent, questioning majority. He will not be able to impose himself as Gormley did. The great quality in an effective democracy is that nothing is taken for granted; all policies have to be explained and all acts justified. The new consensus in the NUM will cover a spectrum of viewpoints and Scargill will have to identify with one of them, isolating the more demagogic leftist ones despite their populist appeal. The president, of course, is not a free agent. Scargill will have to work within real constraints; he will be confronted by painful options which are not always apparent to the ordinary members. In this situation he could easily take a course which separated him from the union membership. If this happened he would have to resort to the methods of his predecessor and the whole process of democratisation, and, in consequence, politicisation would be held back. No previous NUM leadership has tried to pursue a dynamic leftwing course. Scargill's ability to encourage this and to work within the pressures it creates will be the measure of his success. □

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**For decades the Left has believed that a socialist economy was inherently superior to a capitalist economy. But the picture is not that simple.**

## A Roundtable Discussion

# Outlook for the Socialist Economies

**Wlodzimierz Brus** is a Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford and author of *Socialist Ownership and Political Systems.*

**Julian Cooper** is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Birmingham and co-author of *The Technological Level of Soviet Industry.*

**Michael Ellman** is Professor of Economics at the University of Amsterdam and author of *Planning Problems in the USSR.*

**Mario Nuti** is Professor of Political Economy and Director of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Birmingham and has written extensively on Polish affairs.

**Chair** *How would you assess the performance of the Soviet and East European economies over the last decade?*

**Mario Nuti** In the course of the 1970s the economic performance of the Soviet Union and East European countries deteriorated — compared with both past trends and the planned targets. This tendency has been particularly visible in the second half of the 1970s. In Eastern Europe, excluding the Soviet Union, the national pruduct was planned to grow at 6.9% in the period 1976-1980, and in no year was such a target actually achieved. Gross industrial output was planned to grow at 7.8% and, again, such a target was never reached in any of those years, and a downward trend is visible almost everywhere with the exception of Bulgaria and the GDR where growth performance has been somewhat maintained.

In the Soviet Union, the national product was planned to grow at 4.7% in the second part of the decade, in the 1976-1980 plan, and this average rate was surpassed in 1978, but by and large the rates were below this target. In 1976 the growth-rate was 5.9%, in 1977 4.5%, in 1978 4.8%, and in 1979 2% compared with 4.3% in the plan. And the same is true, but even more so, of gross industrial output which had an average planned rate of growth of 6.3% which was never reached throughout the five year plan.

**Julian Cooper** If you look at the Soviet case, it seems to me that you can't speak of a dramatic decline in growth, even in the second half of the 1970s. Rather, there's been a very long term decline in growth rates from about the mid-1960s. I think the Soviet performance had been particularly affected by three very bad harvests in the last three years. This accentuates the downward trend. Industrial output has also been bad in the second half of the 1970s, but again one should not exaggerate. It's been an average annual rate of about $4\frac{1}{2}$% over the last five years which seems , by international standards, a reasonably respectable rate of growth, though currently, this year, it's below $3\frac{1}{2}$%. But productivity of labour has clearly stagnated. It grew about 6% a year in the first half of the 70s, and just over 3% in the second half.

**Wlodzimierz Brus** The Soviet case is different from the East European, but not necessarily in the way Julian has suggested. First of all, the Soviet Union is a clear-cut case of slowdown, of declining growth rates since 1950. Every five year period except 1966-70 showed an annual rate of growth lower than the previous one, and what is more, in every case the actual rate achieved was lower than that planned. The same applies also to the beginning of the 1980s where again we have a reduction, but as now all the rates are much lower the differences cannot be so striking.

However, in my view, the East Europeans are basically going the Soviet way and they would have done it earlier — in the first half of the 70s — if not for the substantial extra resources obtained through massive credits from the West. The Soviet Union did not borrow on an even remotely similar scale. According to the plans for 1981-85, further deceleration will take place virtually everywhere. Hence two questions must be answered: first, what are the general reasons for this loss of dynamism and second, to what extent was the dramatic turn that occurred in the mid 70s linked to some special factors like the energy crisis.

**Michael Ellman** I'd just like to make a couple of observations. Firstly, as Julian said quite correctly, there have been three bad harvests in the Soviet Union, 1979, 1980 and 1981 and these helped to produce very low growth rate statistics. Secondly, the output of certain individual industrial products is falling. Coal output fell in 1979 and it fell in 1980, while oil output has stopped rising. The growth of the Soviet economy, as measured by statistics, has virtually come to a halt.

**Chair** *Well, can we have a look now at the causes of this process?*

**MN** Clearly, one of the underlying factors must be the inherent inefficiency of the centrally-planned economy, exacerbated by the exhaustion of both labour reserves and reserves of raw materials and energy, so that growth has been acquired, as it were, at an increasing cost. Partly it has been a consequence, perhaps, of over-ambition — the kind of extrapolation of fast growth into the future made at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU.[1] There was a disregard for the limits to growth and, therefore, the persistence of economic policies which were, perhaps, well-founded before the exhaustion of reserves, but were no longer so by the 1970s and perhaps even in the 1960s. To this, I think, we must add the impact of exogenous factors, the adverse atmospheric conditions which affect agriculture and related industries, and also building and transport. It is easy to overplay these natural factors because this sensitivity to natural conditions is itself partly the result of a disregard for investment in agriculture

The roundtable was chaired by Monty Johnstone. It took place in Birmingham on 10 December.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and transport. Nevertheless, there have been some unfavourable exogenous natural factors. While another factor is the impact of the oil crisis and the world recession.

**ME** We have to remember here though that there is a big diversity of experience between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union has benefited substantially from the increase in world market prices of its main exports, oil, gas and gold. It has benefited from trends on the world market while raw material importing countries like Hungary have lost substantially.

**MN** The recession has had a wider impact because of the opening of these economies in general to the West and the increasing reliance of the Soviet Union and other countries on the import of technology and grain. Moreover the expectation of being able to pay for these imports with exports has been frustrated by the world recession. At the same time the rise in interest rates in the West between 1973 and 1981 has led to a mounting burden of debt which was not anticipated and which has had a very significant deflationary effect on domestic policies.

**JC** I don't think the world capitalist crisis is such an important factor for the Soviet Union. It's a factor which affects the East European countries much more than the Soviet Union. In the case of the Soviet Union one must look much more to internal causes for the slowdown in growth which is, in any case, a long term process.

One of these is the very sharp decline in the rate of growth of the labour force, which became increasingly important over the 70s. Whereas in the earlier period there was plenty of labour available from agriculture, this has now dried up. The problem is further complicated by the fact that industrial employment in the Soviet Union continues to rise against the trend in many other advanced industrial countries, and so the labour problem is extremely serious. Then there is the exhaustion of easily available mineral and fuel resources. The shift to the East for mineral and fuel resources has involved very considerable costs indeed.

There is also the inertia of the planning and management system itself, and of attitudes within it — the failure to respond rapidly enough to these new circumstances. I think at the moment that's a very considerable problem. There has also been the diversification and multiplication of priorities in this period of increasing demand for and necessity of improving living standards, and also the burden of defence. It is undeniable that this has held back the whole rate of growth, not least because it may well have had an impact on scientific and technical progress in the Soviet economy.

**ME** There are two schools of thought in Eastern Europe about the relationship between the evident economic crisis in Eastern Europe and the world economic crisis. There are those who would lay the blame essentially on the capitalists and their crisis for having caused all the problems and those who stress the internal causes, the fact that the growth strategy pursued for many years has come to a halt, the fact that the economic institutions are increasingly unsuitable. In this connection, as far as the internal factors are concerned, I'd like to draw attention to the importance in the traditional planning system of the absence of any feedback mechanism — both economic through the market, and socio-political through independent institutions in society. This absence of feedback mechanism enables governments to pursue disastrous policies until they lead to a catastrophe, as in Poland.

Now a remark about the increasing cost resulting from opening up new regions of the country. It is obviously true that as you explore for oil or natural gas in increasingly remote and inaccessible areas, it gets more expensive. But you have to bear in mind that some of the enormously expensive investment projects in remote areas that the Soviet Union goes in for are simply badly chosen like many of Poland's investment projects in the 70s.

**WB** I think we all agree that there are external factors. These external factors are very interesting to discuss, but I'm not sure they can be designated the main culprit. This would be too easy. First, we must recognise that as far as the Soviet Union is concerned, this was a long term trend of slowdown. Second, the external dependence of the Soviet Union is not so great anyway. And thirdly, in many respects the Soviet Union has gained in terms of prices during this period, particularly in relation to Eastern Europe.

Now, take Eastern Europe. As has been said already, the crisis elements would have appeared there earlier if it had not been for Western credits. But obviously they could not go on borrowing indefinitely, and when the brakes had to be applied, internal inefficiencies came to the fore. Let's take the case of Poland — well before 1980. Poland, until 1973, was a net exporter of food products; until 1978 it was a net exporter of energy. Towards the end of the 70s, it became not only a massive net importer of food but even a net importer of energy. This means that there had been domestic factors responsible for this sort of transformation which made Poland so terribly vulnerable to external conditions. So we can't actually separate internal and external problems: we have to look at the former in order to explain the growing external dependence and the growing vulnerability.

Now to the major causes of the decline. Most people point to, and rightly so, the over-centralised system of planning and management of the economy. But this has been discussed for a very long period, its deficiencies have been acknowledged all over the place, not only in countries like Yugoslavia and Hungary, but even in the Soviet Union. And despite everything, nothing has changed. Why? There is no answer to this question without taking into account the political system, which excludes any kind of pluralism. Major economic decisions are imposed from above without genuine social control, and there is no mechanism of verifying the consequences of these decisions. There is not market verification — nobody is going bankrupt. There is no political verification — nobody loses an election for wrong policies. The only thing that remains is an explosion.

**JC** In discussing the declining performance of these economies, I don't think the growth indicator should be the sole measure we use. I think this is a mistake. One must take account of the fact that these countries have positive factors like full employment with relative price stability in most cases compared with the West in the recent period, and also on the whole greater social equality in terms of earnings.

But what is becoming more and more apparent as these societies develop is that they have their own contradictions which I don't think were really appreciated at all in the 60s by Soviet economists or socialists elsewhere. The fact that a society tries to maintain full employment and control prices brings about new problems, new difficulties. The problem facing economists in the East and the West is unravelling and understanding these contradictions in order to devise policies to tackle these problems.

**ME** This is a very important matter, about how certain advantages

[1] At its 22nd Congress in 1961, the Soviet Communist Party adopted its current programme which stated that the Soviet Union would 'surpass . . . the USA in production per head of the population' by 1970 — *ed.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are intimately linked with certain problems. On the one hand you have full employment in Eastern Europe, and I regard that as a serious achievement; on the other hand you have shortages, and these shortages are closely linked with the working of the economy and with full employment. You have to try to balance one against the other, but you may well get neither.

**WB** This is true, but we must take into account the link between full employment and the proper use of material factors which, when wasted, may create a threat to full employment. In the East European economies, shortages of raw materials, especially energy, strongly constrain useful employment. Yet in spite of this, the use of energy per unit of output is much greater in the socialist countries than the West. There has been very little progress in the conservation of energy since 1973. Eastern Europe does not seem to have responded to that great shock. Why? Because of a faulty economic system which lacks a means of economic verification and relies on purely administrative instruments. Everybody is interested in increased inputs, in getting more inputs for less outputs. Prizes are actually awarded for waste and if this is not altered, neither the falling growth trend will prove reversible nor will useful employment be guaranteed.

**ME** That means that the system is having a steadily increasing negative effect. The question is why?

**WB** Because the complexity of the economy is growing and the importance of these economic criteria as opposed to simple quantitative criteria are increasing; over time the negative elements of the system play an increasingly important role. In addition, there is a political and sociological problem. People form permanent attitudes and habits when constantly exposed to the perverse 'rules of the games' of this system. In the long run, this is perhaps the greatest damage: people become anti-social.

**ME** Yes, one of the most striking aspects of socialist planning is the enormous privatisation of economic interests. Because the system works in a crazy way and people feel alienated from the social system, they only interest themselves in their own personal affairs, the deals they can do in order to get scarce goods and generally how they can maximise their own position and that of their family, and to hell with the rest of society. That, of course, taken on a large scale has an effect on the workings of the economic system in a way not always captured in macro-economic statistics.

**MN** We are saying the system is becoming increasingly inefficient. I think this is partly because of the very success of previous policies which has undermined the justification for those policies, partly because we are seeing a deterioration of the external conditions, and partly because a number of things, like shortages, are cumulative. So it's not just that the system is becoming more inefficient because of its own drawbacks. It's a rather more complex picture.

**ME** If you want to plant in any country in the world the kind of resource-intensive economic system which goes under the name of socialist planning, then the USSR in the 20s and 30s was the ideal place because it had so many resources that weren't being used, both labour resources and natural resources.

**WB** I want to emphasise that in my view it is completely wrong to think that, for instance, in conditions of plentiful resources, as in the USSR in the past, you can apply a system which does not give due consideration to efficiency, and then simply switch it off. It is very difficult to extract oneself from the political, social and economic implications of such a system. The long run price may be much too high.

**Chair** *Could we go on from here to look at the specific question of agriculture and the supply of food which is obviously crucial to the problems we've been discussing?*

**ME** The main problems in Soviet agriculture are the high costs of production and the attempt to hold state retail prices stable. The high costs of production are a dramatic feature of Soviet agriculture, and an integral part of Brezhnev's agricultural policy has been an enormous investment in agriculture on a very large scale over very many years. But the returns on the investment are, to say the least, disappointing. In addition there's an enormous subsidy bill in the Soviet Union because the retail price of meat has, I think, been kept constant now for 19 years. Since the mid 70s the output of meat has stagnated, and is no higher now than it was in 1975, but money incomes have risen sharply which means that there are ever increasing shortages and this is a serious problem. Any economist will tell you that you can abolish shortages by raising prices, but as we all know that has certain implications and causes certain problems which are a worry for a government.

Now, it must be said that for climatological reasons Soviet agriculture is rather vulnerable to changes in natural conditions, and that this has nothing to do with socialism or collectivisation. The Soviet Union has had three bad harvests — in 1979, 1980 and 1981 — and this has been a very important cause of these three bad and disappointing economic years. You would normally expect, after a run of three bad harvests, better weather and a better harvest. If this is so, it will have a favourable impact on the whole Soviet economy and I myself expect that to happen.

I should like to make one observation of a more general kind: in my view the fundamental reason for the problems of agriculture in socialist countries is that the theory on which their policies are based is erroneous. According to this theory, large scale socialist agriculture is enormously superior to small scale private agriculture. I think this is definitely wrong, has been shown to be so in many countries, and has very important implications. It means that all these enormous investment programmes for building a large scale Soviet livestock sector are based on an erroneous conception. In contrast, it must be recognised that there are specific advantages in small scale agricultural production.

**JC** I agree with the first half of Michael's analysis, but have doubts on the second which I'll specify. I think the Soviet leadership is at last beginning to recognise that bad weather is a fairly normal state of affairs that has to be planned for.

I think the labour supply system in the countryside is clearly very important. The loss of labour from agriculture has been quite dramatic in the Soviet Union over the last 20 years, and the ageing of the labour force in the countryside, the fact that young people don't stay and settle there to introduce modern technology, is important. So although about one-fifth of the Soviet labour force is still in the agricultural sector, a remarkably high share by international standards, demographically its structure is not very favourable.

One of the main problems about Soviet agriculture has been the lack of differentiation in approach: an attempt has been made to impose a standard pattern over the whole countryside. But it seems to me we can't say the whole theory of large scale collective agriculture is wrong. Rather, some of the advantages of large scale production haven't been fully realised and probably only apply to certain

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forms of agriculture. We're seeing slowly and haltingly a willingness to have greater differentiation of policy and flexibility in relation to agricultural production and some role in it is clearly going to be played for a long time yet by the private sector, which is undoubtedly a highly efficient sector of Soviet agriculture.

**WB** I'm glad that Michael has raised these more general problems because we have to say, and it's very significant that on the whole the socialist countries are a burden on the world food problem and not a contributor to solving it. I agree with Michael also that the superiority of large scale agriculture has been exaggerated. What I think the recent experience of Eastern Europe shows is that some kind of balanced approach is needed and not a one-sided approach in another direction. The best results in agricultural production in socialist countries are now being obtained where some kind of careful combination of large scale collective production with small scale private or semi-private production is possible. Hungary is a good case in point of such co-operation between collective and private farms.

**ME** I agree with Wlodek on these matters. I'd like to make another remark connected with agriculture in order to stress the importance of it. It's difficult for people here to take agriculture very seriously, it being such a small branch of the economy in Western Europe. It is necessary to emphasise that food shortages are of enormous political importance in the countries where they occur, in particular Rumania, Soviet Union and Poland. Everyone knows about the importance of food shortages in Poland. Rumania recently introduced bread rationing, and there is a situation of serious food shortage. There have been strikes and riots and, according to some reports, the President of Rumania had stones thrown at him when he tried to address angry workers. I myself expect in the next six months there will be strikes and riots scattered around the Soviet Union in various small places. These will result from food shortages. People are very concerned about food shortages and will go on strike or organise riots, not in an organised political way, but simply in a spontaneous way to express their discontent.

**MN** I'd like to make two remarks on agriculture. First, that large-size units are most unusual in capitalist countries, in fact, it's one sector where you don't find joint stock companies and large units, certainly not the kind of size you find in the Soviet collective and state farms. The problem of large size has been compounded by the neglect of investment in agriculture, especially in state farms, because clearly if you use wage-labour and therefore don't rely on the immediate self-interest of the farmworker, you must have large amounts of machinery and fertilisers. Second, on relative prices and the impact of prices on the supply of agricultural goods, I think that ultimately there has to be an improvement in the terms of trade between agriculture and other sectors. Now, this seen from the point of view of industrial workers must mean, and this is something that Polish unionists have not yet recognised, a lower standard of living for industrial workers.

**WB** There was relatively large investment in Polish agriculture during the 70s. But it was completely wrongly directed. The re-direction of investment, in the Polish case, to private agriculture would bring a substantial effect.

**JC** It seems to me in the Soviet case, anyway, and it may well be true in Eastern Europe as well, that the problem of investment in agriculture has not simply been its misdirection within agriculture but rather the neglect of the infra-structure. Only now, with the so-called 'food programme' is the Soviet government beginning to realise the enormity of the problem and that it must be seen as a whole. In the Soviet case, investment in storage and refrigeration facilities and transport may, in fact, in the short run be more beneficial in terms of improving the food situation than investment in agriculture.

**ME** I wish to disagree with Julian's optimistic analysis of the so-called 'food programme'. He thinks the food programme will have a very good effect but it is a typical grandiose investment project like those tried in Poland in the mid-70s. It will probably cost thousands of millions of roubles and produce few positive results. Some of the main problems of agriculture actually come from the economic mechanism. They are similar to the problems industry suffers from and, unfortunately, in Soviet-type societies farms have less political influence than important industrial plants and suffer even more.

**Chair** *Let's turn now to the question of economic reform. What are the main obstacles to changing the over-centralised system which, as was already recognised by the late 50s and early 60s, no longer corresponds to the needs of the economy?*

**WB** I'd say there are three main obstacles. The first is political in the sense that some people at the top believe that changing the economic mechanism may undermine the political system and their political power. I think this is not entirely true and perhaps now, with the experience of Poland where reforms have not been carried out and the degree of political stability in Hungary where reforms have been made, there may be an inducement to change. Nevertheless, it is a fact. The second factor, which I distinguish from the first one, is the vested interests of a large group of people, both those at the top and those who form the second layer of administration. They stand to lose in personal terms, especially so as the positions in the bureaucratic hierarchy are linked with all kinds of privileges which were revealed most clearly in Poland but which obviously exist everywhere in socialist countries. The third element is the genuine difficulties in introducing and running a new system, a reformed system; this requires a very consistent, patient economic

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy in order to create more favourable conditions for this to operate. The Hungarian example which we have evoked so often today shows clearly all these difficulties.

**ME** I've one point of agreement and one of disagreement. As far as agreement is concerned, I think the self-interest of many officials is a very important matter. People often say, especially people I've met on the Left in Western Europe, that since reforms are so desirable, they obviously ought to be introduced straight away. The fact of the matter is that the importance, future and status of a lot of people is bound up with this system.

I'd like to add now a note of discord which doesn't apply to the small Comecon countries, but does apply to the Soviet Union and insufficient attention, I think, is generally given to it: namely, a basic determining factor in Soviet policy, as with the Russian Empire before it, can be described as *'raison d'état'*. The fact is that the Soviet Union is a great power in a world of great powers and has to compete with the others; this has important implications. It means that in determining the overall policy of the Soviet state, military programmes and certain non-economic investment projects like the BAM railway[2] are of great importance. Everybody knows that you don't facilitate your military programmes by having economic reforms.

**JC** Obstacles to change in the East European countries are different to those in the Soviet Union. In the latter, the very structure of organisation of the economy itself and industry is clearly a major factor. The fact that industry in the Soviet Union is basically controlled by about 35 industrial ministries means that there's an immense concentration of power by vested interests which by and large refuse to co-operate with one another unless their heads are knocked together by some formal arrangements. Even within the ministries, the divisions don't co-operate very easily. Khruschev tried to solve this by sweeping them away and replacing them by regional organisation: that clearly wasn't the answer either, he just didn't appreciate the complexity of the problem. What we're now seeing in the Soviet Union is the growth of informal arrangements rather like those of the Khruschev period. The Soviet economy is an economy of great heterogeneity of resources on a multi-level basis. At the top, there are the high priority sectors of defence and one or two civilian sectors which command the best resources and highest priorities. It seems extremely difficult to get an overall structure of reform appropriate to such a system and the various interests within it.

Now on the direction of recent reform in the Soviet Union. The July 1979 mini-reform was interesting in the sense that it brought together lots of experiments of the preceding period: reorganisation and a sort of merger movement, some changes in the planning system, the strengthening of the programme principle in Soviet planning, some changes in the economic mechanism and a net output indicator which is supposed to produce a more efficient use of materials and resources, and other things. The problem about this is that the reforms have been introduced in a half-hearted way. But I would say that in the Soviet case there's still a lot of slack to take up by partial policies on lots of different fronts rather than by more radical reform. It seems that the Soviet Union has still quite a lot of mileage in that kind of approach, but it may not be the case in the Eastern European countries.

**ME** One has to distinguish between the intentions of measures announced and what actually happens. Julian gives the impression that a thousand and one marvellous things have been done, but what has actually happened? Various things have been announced and none have turned out as expected; all of them have taken much longer than planned.

**WB** There is a Polish saying to the effect that you cannot change your sheepskin coat by pinning a small flower to it. And this is what has actually happened in most of the instances mentioned by Julian. Genuine economic reforms mean changes which involve the abolition of the two pillars of the command system of planning: (i) obligatory targets given to enterprises and (ii) the physical allocation of resources. Of course, in any system, there will be some who perform better and some who do worse. The GDR is probably doing better within the existing system than the Soviet Union is, but in both cases the fundamental deficiencies remain.

I agree with Michael that 'imperial' considerations may play a role in perpetuating the old system, but in the long run the 'imperial' considerations may also press for economic reform. Because you cannot indefinitely secure the growing efficiency of the military-industrial complex in an overall deteriorating economic context.

**Chair** *May we now pass on to the question of technical innovation and ask why the technological gap between the socialist countries and the capitalist countries, which it was assumed would be closed, has not in fact been closed?*

**ME** In contemporary Soviet plans, action on technical progress comes first. That shows you the symbolic significance that is attached to it. Not only that, but tremendous inputs go into the science sector of the economy. Just count up the number of people, according to the statistical handbooks, who are engaged in scientific research. But as far as producing new products is concerned, the results are disappointing. Why is this? Well think how the whole thing is organised. In every sector, there is a ministry to which are attached one or more scientific research institutes. It has a kind of technical monopoly. And what does it do? It does an investigation, has a plan, produces reports. Suppose someone comes who has a new idea, who doesn't work there or isn't in the plan — they tell them to go to hell. They are not interested in that. Their job is to fulfil plans not produce revolutionary new products — that's something entirely different.

One of the striking things about capitalism is that it generates revolutionary new products, one after the other. Before 1750 there was virtually no technical progress for thousands of years by modern standards. Since then we have seen rapid technical progress and that is associated with a particular form of economic organisation, industrial capitalism, which has certain well known problems but also certain advantages as well. Why does it innovate? Because there are firms which compete. If they fail, they get driven out of business and go bankrupt. To succeed, to make profits, they must innovate. Some products are anti-social, like cigarettes, but others are quite useful, like personal computers. No satisfactory mechanism to replace the capitalist industrial firm as a generator of rapid technical progress has been found under traditional socialist planning, which is why Hungary, which has gone furthest in the direction of economic reform, is now having a major discussion about why there is no such thing as socialist entrepreneurship and how to create it. That is a very topical and important problem for Comecon.

**JC** Socialists in the past have had a very simplified view that socialism, by its very nature, will be more dynamic in the development of science and technology. Historically that has been shown not to be true. One of the things that characterises Soviet technology

[2] This is a giant railway project in the Soviet Far East — *ed.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is its unevenness. In some sectors you find relative strengths compared with world technology, in some extreme backwardness. In general, however, you can say that as you move from science to the wider diffusion of technology, performance declines compared with the West.

**WB** I agree with Michael. I must add though that recently we have seen one very successful example of socialist entrepreneurship, Hungarian entrepreneurship, with the Rubik cube. And now he is a millionaire!

I fully agree though that there is unevenness. The Soviet system has managed to achieve relatively high technological development in a few selected areas at great cost. Now what are the restrictive factors? First, it is again what Michael mentioned, this straitjacket of the over-centralised planning system. Second, the lack of diffusion, so even if substantial technological progress in one area is achieved, the spill-over is very small. This is paradoxical because one of the accusations against capitalism was the hampering of the spread of new technology through commercial secrets. Apart from general causes of weak diffusion in socialist countries, the dogma of bigness may also have played a role. In many cases, small firms are generating technical progress which is sometimes take up afterwards by the big corporations. This is particularly true of electronics and related areas. There are really no similar small firms in the socialist countries.

**ME** The Soviet Union, as Julian said, is quite good at new scientific ideas, but less good at introducing them into production. There was an American report published a few years ago in which the author, a consultant for the American government, suggested that American firms should buy licences for Soviet technology from Soviet research organisations, produce the products themselves and put them on the world market. I thought that was a funny joke when I first read it. But I recently had discussions with a multinational company based in Holland that is actually involved in doing this, and they think this is a splendid thing. And they are showing, in a funny kind of a way, that they are superior, from a production point of view, to the socialist system.

**JC** Another important factor in the level of technology is the weakness of customer power in these economies. There is no powerful countervailing force from the customer pushing firms in the direction of higher levels of technology. The exception, of course, being the military and those sectors which are now heavily involved in foreign trade. Foreign trade is having an impact in some sectors of the Soviet engineering industry where they have succeeded in getting on to the world market and have been obliged to raise the quality of their products.

**ME** One of the most important results of this technology problem is to be seen in the structure of foreign trade. The USSR is now the world's second largest industrial country and what does it export to the West? Does it export sophisticated industrial products? No. It primarily exports raw materials, namely, oil, gas, gold and wood. That partly reflects the fact that it can't produce the necessary high quality goods and partly poor marketing. Now let's take another country, namely the GDR. This is the most advanced of the Comecon countries. It is a country where the national income per head is now in excess of the UK. And look at the structure of its foreign trade, for example with West Germany. It exports not advanced industrial goods but by and large primary products. And now, as a consequence, it is having increasing problems with its foreign trade, its balance of payments.

**JC** On the question of what the technology gap actually is. Research done suggests that over a wide range of industries and sectors the socialist countries lag behind the West. But it varies from sector to sector. In computers it's about 6-8 years behind and the evidence suggests that over quite a long period this gap hasn't really narrowed very much. What has been happening is that the Soviet Union has been improving its technological level but at a rate similar to that on average of the West.

**ME** There is a technology gap — it is a significant problem — and despite what we all expected, particularly people on the Left, it seems just as big now as it was 15-20 years ago. There doesn't seem to have been any significant reduction in that gap and that is kind of queer both because of what we used to think about the advantages of socialist planning and also because the socialist countries have devoted enormous efforts to importing technology.

**WB** This is a very pertinent question. The import of licences and technology will never by itself close the gap if you simply implement the technology and stop there. It must be further developed: it must become a sort of ignition for the economy. This unfortunately does not usually happen in Eastern Europe.

**Chair** *I would like to lead on from there to the energy sector. Would somebody like to deal with the energy problem?*

**JC** The Soviet Union does undoubtedly face an energy problem. There is no question about that and it has come about with the exhaustion of the readily available reserves of coal and oil. While there isn't the crisis situation in oil which the CIA, for a while, predicted, certainly there is a slowdown in Soviet oil production. The new 5 year plan sees a small growth over the period. Predictions after that are that it will start to decline in absolute terms. The Soviet Union will have a problem in the short run of covering an energy gap which it hopes eventually will be filled by nuclear power, on which it will rely very heavily.

In the meantime, it will look to natural gas and coal. The Soviet Union is very fortunate in still having substantial reserves of natural gas which can be exported for many years yet without any real problems. It will be a major foreign exchange earner over the next 10-15 years. At the same time, it is trying to revive the coal industry again with a massive new investment to increase coal production.

**MN** The energy problem is exacerbated by the high level of energy consumption per unit of output. Even after allowances are made for the different structure of output in, for instance, the OECD countries and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, we find that not only is energy consumption higher but they have not responded to the energy crisis to anything like the same degree as the West. There has only been a very modest rate of decline in energy consumption per unit of output.

Another aspect of the energy problem, especially in Eastern Europe, is the very considerable reliance on coal as well as oil. This is partly a blessing in disguise, and partly an indication of backwardness. The East European countries are known to be very dependent on Soviet oil deliveries and this dependence and sensitivity is not the same for different countries. In order of dependence we can rank Czechoslovakia, Hungary, GDR, Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania. One major factor for the Eastern European countries in the future will be an increased reliance on oil deliveries from non-Soviet sources. This in turn involves a considerable increase in the unit cost of oil for these countries and it will require considerable

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

effort on the part of these countries in the promotion of exports to the hard currency areas in order to pay for that oil.

**WB** For Comecon, the main energy problem is the smaller Eastern European countries and not the Soviet Union. For the Soviet Union, if it had not been politically committed to exporting a very considerable part of its resources to Eastern Europe, the situation would be different. But together, of course, it's a very acute problem, exacerbated obviously by the balance of payments constraint which makes it very difficult to increase imports of oil from non-Soviet sources. Moreover, the Polish situation adds a new headache to the energy balance for the entire region. It may mean a real fall in the production of coal and probably for a long time the Eastern European countries will have to find some sort of substitute for that part of Polish coal which is no longer being exported to them. As far as nuclear energy is concerned, the socialist countries are in an advantageous position of a kind because so far no one publicly protests against the construction of nuclear power stations, regardless of their safety standards.

**ME** I would like to deal with another aspect of this energy problem. It is absolutely clear that the small Eastern European countries are economically a burden on the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is selling to small Eastern European countries for transferable roubles, below the world market price, energy that could be sold on the world market for hard currency. That is an important matter and those people who think that relations between the Soviet Union and the small Eastern European countries are a sort of traditional, economic imperialism are making a big mistake. Comecon integration is not being pursued to bring economic gains to the Soviet Union.

**Chair** *Now let's turn to the prospects for the future.*

**WB** It looks as if we face at least 5 years of almost stagnation in these countries. The decline in growth rates is a much greater blow for the Soviet and Eastern European economies than it would be in a comparable Western situation. So I think prospects for the future are very difficult. It can be alleviated, I think, by very well thought-out changes in the system. Although nothing sensational can happen at once in the economy under the influence of such change, it can become a source of some relatively modest but sustained improvement. To what extent such changes will be carried out is another story.

**ME** I must say that if economic stagnation comes about, and I am less sure than the other speakers that it will, it would cause serious legitimisation problems for the regimes in Eastern Europe since a large part of their legitimacy comes from their success up until now in generating high rates of economic growth.

**WB** I have not said stagnation, but virtual stagnation. Let me qualify a little. Excluding Poland, the annual growth rate was 4.5% in the previous 5 year plan period. Now the plans are lower again compared with the previous performance and still there is justifiable doubt about their fulfillment. So I think on average we can expect something around 2.5-3% growth within the next 5 year period. This is what I have in mind.

**JC** I am inclined to agree with Wlodek on this. A realistic expectation for the Soviet Union is a 3% annual rate of growth of national income over the next five years. Now, the effects of this will partly depend on what happens in the capitalist world. If, as seems likely, the Americans are heading for deeper recession, and there is no real prospect of a major upturn in the next 5 year period in the capitalist countries, then the problems of legitimation that Michael spoke about must be seen in a slightly different light. Moreover, even with lower growth rates, these countries will have a better employment and prices position, excluding perhaps Poland and one or two other countries.

**WB** What you are saying is that the legitimacy of the system may be saved by deep recession in the West, hardly a consolation.

**MN** I would put myself on the lower range of optimism in this group. There will be on average a modest growth, probably less than 2.5-3%. And this will be barely enough to compensate for the unavoidable deterioration in terms of trade which will occur throughout Eastern Europe, and also the Soviet Union. On the question of legitimation, a parallel crisis in the West is not going to satisfy the population at large, in the sense that expectations are somewhat different. It is not a question of comparison of performance, the individual perception of performance will be paramount. So we can expect disappointment and therfore unrest, which might lead to forms of democratisation, or alternatively, forms of authoritarian rule.

**Chair** *What are the implications of all this for the Left in Western Europe?*

**ME** We are now living through a world economic crisis, as in the 30s. However in the crisis of the 30s, there was a very widespread view that socialist planning was the solution to economic problems. Once you had socialist planning — which was understood as the traditional Soviet economic system — then you had the solution to all your economic difficulties. But the present world economic crisis is very different from that in the sense that one of its first casualties has been socialist planning. It's an unfortunate fact, but an important one, that we are drifting into a situation in which socialist planning will be as much of an electoral liability to the groups on the Left as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

**WB** I agree that socialist planning has ceased to be an automatic political asset. This is deplorable because planning on a national scale has an enormous role to play, and therefore it should regain its former political attraction. In order to achieve this, we must stop simply using slogans about planning and concentrate instead on careful examination and explanation of the kind of planning which will be able to stand up better to social expectations. What is completely wrong is to close our eyes to all the conflicts which planning under socialism can never resolve. This is the worst possible solution. I am not even mentioning here the need for an uninhibited critical assessment of the Soviet-type planning.

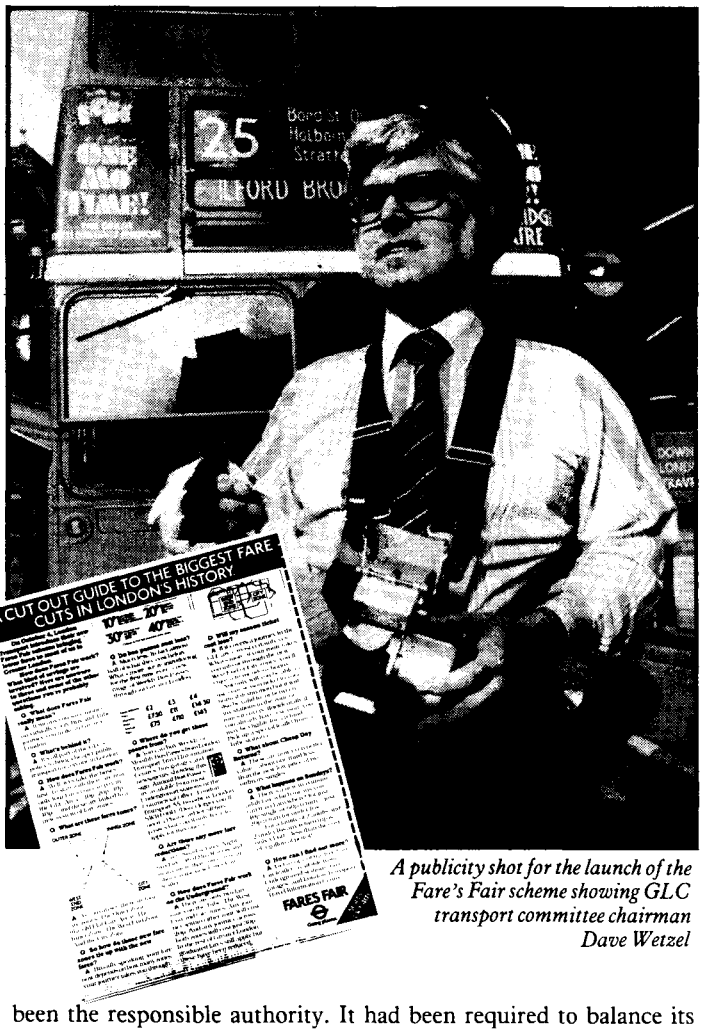
**JC** I think Michael has exaggerated. To ordinary people facts like full employment and security are important. But I do think there are lessons for the Left. In the past the Left has had a very abstract and rather utopian view about socialist economies. The events of the recent period are beginning to lead to a more differentiated and realistic approach.

**MN** The most important thing for the Left in the West is not to lose confidence in socialism because of the deterioration in economic performane in the socialist countries, and to look at socialism as it actually exists as a kind of living organism which is capable of changing. There is some hope in that direction. But the best thing for the Western Left is to produce its own model of socialism. □

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Griffith

# The Law Lords and the GLC




*A publicity shot for the launch of the Fare's Fair scheme showing GLC transport committee chairman Dave Wetzel*

As everyone knows, this case concerned the validity of a supplementary precept issued by the Greater London Council to, amongst others, the London Borough of Bromley, and through that borough, to the ratepayers of all London, for the levying of a rate of 6.1p in the £ for the period 1 October 1981 to 31 March 1982. The Labour majority on the GLC so resolved on 21 July 1981 in implementation of a commitment in their election manifesto of May 1979 the purpose of which was to make certain improvements, and to reduce fares on buses and underground trains by, broadly, 25%. Strictly, only 3.6p in the £ was required by this purpose, the remaining 2.5p being to meet a deficit incurred by the previous Conservative administration.

In English law there are two grounds on which the exercise of powers by a public authority can be challenged. Those powers are conferred by Act of Parliament and are, more or less precisely, defined by the Act. It an exercise is held by the courts to fall outside that definition, then it is illegal and void. But, in addition, even if a public authority is acting within its powers, an exercise may be held to be illegal and void for a variety of reasons, invented over the years by the courts, and including the grounds that the exercise was unreasonable or that the authority did not take into account relevant considerations or took into account irrelevant considerations. Those grounds are highly imprecise and have become a happy hunting-ground for lawyers and judges. Whether the courts will decide that one or other of these grounds applies to the case in front of them is anyone's guess.

Bromley brought this action, lost in the High Court, and won in the Court of Appeal where Lord Denning presided. The GLC appealed to the Law Lords who rejected the appeal.

**The five Law Lords**

Unlike most countries, it is the frequent English practice for each of the judges (usually three in the Court of Appeal, five in the House of Lords) to deliver a separate judgement. No doubt they confer with one another but it can happen that they arrive at the same result on quite different grounds. This does not, to speak mildly, either make for certainty in the law or help to persuade the losing side that English justice is rational. This case is an excellent example of judges (in the Court of Appeal and House of Lords) disagreeing with one another while arriving at the same conclusion. So it is both necessary and instructive to look at the reasons given by the five Law Lords.

The relevant statute is the Transport (London) Act 1969. Under the previous legislation the London Passenger Transport Board had been the responsible authority. It had been required to balance its revenue account over the years but the Minister of Transport could make grants to meet deficits. The GLC had no place in this structure but the Act of 1969 transferred the powers of the LPTB to the GLC and its subordinate: the London Transport Executive. The general duty of the GLC is stated to be to develop and encourage measures which will promote the provision of 'integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities and services for Greater London'.

Lord Wilberforce is the most senior of the Law Lords. He began his judgement by considering the meaninig of the word 'economic' about which there was, throughout all the proceedings, much argument. Unlike some of the other judges, Wilberforce adopted an interpretation broadly favourable to the GLC ie, 'making the most effective use of resources in the context of an integrated system'.

Section 3 of the Act of 1969 gives the GLC power to make grants to the LTE 'for any purpose' and it was generally accepted that this could include grants for revenue as well as capital purposes.

At this point Wilberforce introduced one of those vague concepts, much beloved by judges who want to attach special and limited meanings to general words. The GLC, he said, owed 'a duty of a fiduciary character' to its ratepayers, as well as to transport users. For good measure, Wilberforce noted that 62% of the rates came from commercial ratepayers. The relevance of this was not made clear.

Under the Act of 1969, the LTE is to act in accordance with principles laid down by the GLC with due regard to efficiency, economy and safety of operation. Wilberforce said it would be reading 'economy' too narrowly to treat it as requiring the LTE to try to make a profit. But it did, he said obscurely, 'prevent the LTE

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from conducting its undertakings on other than economic considerations'. Section 7 of the Act puts duties on the LTE. This section is too long to be quoted in full but Wilberforce summarised the contrary arguments about its meaning thus. Bromley argued that the section meant the LTE must run its undertaking on business principles and so far as practicable must meet its revenue charges out of fares and other *internal* (ie, excluding grant) revenue; that the power of the GLC to make grants in aid of revenue must be exercised with due regard to the LTE's duty, so far as practicable, to balance its own accounts; that the GLC could not allow or encourage the LTE to abdicate any duty, or renounce any effort, to avoid a deficit. The GLC and LTE argued that the LTE in putting forward fare proposals might take account of a prospective grant on revenue account from the GLC and was not limited to internally generated revenue alone.

Wilberforce recognised that there had been for some years political discussion as to whether, and to what extent, public transport, especially in capital cities, should be financed as a social service. But he was 'unable to see' from the Act of 1969 that Parliament had then 'taken any clear stance' on the question. He concluded that it was clear that neither the LTE nor the GLC could have power totally to disregard any responsibility for ensuring, so far as practicable, that outgoings were met by revenue and that the LTE ran its business on economic lines.

**Lord Diplock**

Lord Diplock's approach was quite different. He regarded section 1 with its reference to the duty of the GLC to develop 'economic' services as the crucial provision. He explicitly rejected the view that the LTE was bound to maximise the income generated from the operation of its undertakings at least to the extent necessary to avoid an operating loss and build up a general reserve. Instead he read the Act to mean that the LTE must operate the services efficiently, economically (in avoiding overmanning and the running of excessive numbers of buses and trains having regard to the number of users) and safety. The LTE, in his view, was not bound to do its best to cover the expenses of its operations from fares. Section 7, which so influenced Wilberforce in his conclusion, was not regarded by Diplock as sufficient in itself to make the GLC precept invalid. Instead he fell back on the 'general fiduciary duty' which, he said, included a duty not to expend monies 'thriftlessly'. At this point he emphasised one aspect of the whole matter which Wilberforce disregarded wholly: that the GLC decision to reduce fares entailed a loss of rate support grant from the Government amounting to some £50m. (This was the operation of Heseltine's punishment for what he deemed overspending). The decision which led to the loss of this £50m was, said Diplock, clearly a thriftless use of monies obtained by the GLC from ratepayers and a deliberate failure to deploy to the best advantage the full financial resources available to it by avoiding any action that would involve forfeiting grants from central government funds.

So Diplock founded his decision not primarily on the terms of the Act of 1969 but on this 'fiduciary duty' imported from case law and applied to the GLC's wholly legitimate attitude to government policy.

**A business venture**

Lord Keith decided similarly, this time basing himself on a case in the middle fifties involving Birmingham Corporation where a ratepayer persuaded the court of Appeal to declare invalid a concessionary fare scheme which enabled old age pensioners to travel free on buses in offpeak periods. This 'loony' decision (as Frank Dobson MP rightly called it in the debate on 22 December 1981) invalidated hundreds of similar schemes in other parts of the country and Parliament immediately passed a statute reversing it. The 'principle' of the Birmingham case, quoted by Keith, was that the transport undertaking was to be run 'as a business venture' and fares fixed 'in accordance with ordinary busines principles'. He concluded that it was contrary to the LTE's duties under the Act to submit proposals which involved an arbitrary reduction in the existing general level of fares; nor could the GLC approve such proposals.

Lord Scarman also relied on the Birmingham case and construed section 1 of the Act of 1969 in the light of the principle of that case, with 'the fiduciary principle' thrown in for good measure. However, like Wilberforce, he found section 7 critical. He agreed that the LTE could treat GLC grant as part of LTE revenue account. But he argued, mysteriously, that nevertheless the view that GLC grant should be excluded from LTE revenue account 'captures the spirit' of section 7. This spirit was that the LTE must, under the direction of the GLC, conduct its operations so as, so far as practicable, to avoid loss. The GLC might, indeed, make grants not only for past, but also for anticipated, losses. But the Act did not entitle the GLC and the LTE 'to accept as an objective of policy' a deficit upon trading account merely because it best met what they regarded as the interests of the travelling public and 'transport need'. This was to disregard the duty owed to ratepayers. 'Loss may be unavoidable: but it does not thereby become an acceptable object of policy'. So section 7 require the LTE to follow, so far as practicable, a financial policy of 'break even'.

Finally Lord Brandon based himself on the narrow ground that the LTE must, in so far as it was practicable for them to do so, balance expenditure with self-generated income and the GLC could only make income grants in order to assist the LTE to do so to the extent that it was not practicable for the latter to do so on their own. (The Ernie Wise syntax is his, not mine).

> They are remarkably powerful and they are not a collection of muddleheaded old buffers out of touch with the real world

**The functions of the judiciary**

So much for what was said.

The political Left have a regrettable tendency to jump up and down with a Thurber-like frenzy, all the more unconvincing for being transparently synthetic, when the establishment behaves as the establishment always behaves. Highpitched complaints that the Law Lords had delivered 'political' judgements show a simple misunderstanding of the role of the judiciary in this country. That role and the system that surrounds it are of much greater importance than the idiosyncracies of particular judges. The judiciary are expected to perform certain functions and have the means to do so. They are remarkably powerful and they are not a collection of muddleheaded old buffers out of touch with the real world. Sometimes, indeed, they show unusual ignorance but not more than you or I when asked to comment outside our experience. They certainly lack omniscience, along with the rest of us, but most of the time they know what they are at. They certainly know more about the working of the political establishment on its higher levels, just as they know less about its working at the grassroots, than we do. They can talk the language of senior civil servants and Ministers of the Crown. They would be unlikely to understand what was actually happening at a ward meeting of the local Labour Party even though they could follow the spoken proceedings.

One of the things they know about is that Acts of Parliament are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

often imperfect instruments for conveying meaning. This is sometimes because events are not foreseen when bills are being drafted, sometimes because ambiguities are left deliberately as compromises, sometimes because words themselves are not wholly efficient as vehicles for expressing ideas. Judges frequently get cross about this. But blaming the draughtsman is often no fairer than shooting the pianist. And judges derive much of their power from the imperfections of the draughting.

**Political answers**

Judges must give meaning to words and phrases. They must also decide whether the facts before them fall within the statutory rule as interpreted by them. And then they may inquire whether there are any other grounds on which the activities of the public authority whose powers they are considering should be declared illegal. This is often expressed, though not in the case we are considering, as taking into account the public interest. It is in this sense that the judiciary are powerful because a phrase like the public interest is so imprecise that a great variety of different meanings can be attributed to it. Similarly, as we have seen, judges use phrases like 'owing a fiduciary duty', or having regard to 'the spirit of the Act'. What does the duty to act 'economically' mean? Are grant monies part of revenue? The answers to all these and similar questions are, in my vocabulary, political because they involve the making of political choices. When Diplock said that the Law Lords were 'not concerned with the wisdom or indeed the fairness of the GLC's decision to reduce by 25% the fares charged' he dug his own trap. I don't suppose the judges asked if the GLC were acting foolishly. But they or some of them certainly had in mind that the GLC had acted unfairly. And I am not clear what Diplock's 'thriftlessness' is if it is not unwise and politically unacceptable (to him).

So also Wilberforce made a political judgement when he said that the GLC and the LTE must run London transport on 'business lines'. So did Scarman when he decided there had been the breach of a fiduciary duty. So did Keith with his 'business principles'. Only Brandon managed to find an interpretation so narrow that it could be said to be value free. And had the other Law Lords decided in the opposite direction, their judgements would have been no less political.

Diplock thought the language of the 1909 Act was sometimes 'opaque and elliptical'. He continued: 'Its lack of clarity *is demonstrated* by the fact that although the House (ie, the Law Lords) has reached a unanimous conclusion that, taken as a whole, the language of the Act leads *ineluctably* to the conclusion, that the GLC had acted illegally, he disagreed with the other Law Lords on the meaning of some provisions of the Act. This suggests the existence of hidden hands leading their Lordships, albeit by different routes, to the same inescapable conclusion. The truth is that they all came to the same political decision: that the GLC and LTE had acted unfairly to London ratepayers.

had the other Law Lords decided in the opposite direction, their judgements would have been no less political

In the debate in the House of Commons on 22 December 1981, George Cunningham said: 'Each of the five judgements rambles over the territory in what can only be called a head-scratching way, making it impossible for the consumer of the judgement to know at the end just what the law is held to be, except negatively, and then only negatively on a few points. When one puts the five judgements together, the effect is chaos'.

This points to a major weakness in the English system of adjudication at the higher levels. No doubt there are conferences of some sort between their Lordships but too often, as in this case, no attempt seems to be made to produce a rational coherent set of principles or, if there is no unanimity, two sets of alternative principles.

**The most serious consequence**

The most serious consequence of the judgements in this case is that public authorities of all kinds, including Ministers, will be even more uncertain of what they may or may not do. 'Fiduciary duty', 'reasonableness', 'businesslike principles' and the rest provide no kind of guide to conduct. The courts have in recent years chosen to venture more and more deeply into political battlegrounds and are in danger of becoming casualties in the process. And because, by their education, training and class, they exercise their powers of interpretation in accordance with a particular code and a particular set of values, they are becoming more and more distrusted by those having other codes and values. Their intervention is rooted in particular political beliefs so that, for example, in this case they seem to have been unable to take any other view.

In practice they had at least two other possible choices. One was to have said that Parliament had by statute vested certain political powers in the hands of the GLC and the LTE and that, unless those authorities could be shown to have acted corruptly or in bad faith, the way they exercised those powers was for them, as politically responsible bodies, to decide. There would be no logical or legal difficulty in so interpreting the Act of 1969 and to do so would have been in accordance with the good principle that, so far as possible, political questions (especially when those questions divide political parties) should be left to politicians and the electorate.

Alternatively, the Law Lords could have really tried to act like politicians in which case they would have talked about social cost and social benefit to the community of a cheap fares policy. This no doubt is what the Supreme Court of the USA would have done.

For myself I would prefer judges to be limited in their political role. But acting as they do, making short term political judgements without showing any awareness of their consequence, following instincts which seem naturally to eschew the raising of additional revenue for social gain, both we and they get the worst of all worlds.

I confess I had thought that the Law Lords would probably in this case, following their policy in the recent industrial law cases (especially the steel strike decision), have refused to intervene in the political dispute between Conservative and Labour in London government. I was wrong. And the moral seems to be that the great wave of judicial interventionism which first lifted its snowy head some twenty years ago is still rolling forward. Who knows what it might not seek to submerge if some future left wing government applies more generally even the moderate measure of Ken Livingstone's socialism. □

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

## An interview with David Puttnam

**David Puttnam is one of Britain's most successful independent film producers with a track record that includes; *That'll Be The Day, Stardust, Mahler, Bugsy Malone, The Duellists, Midnight Express, Foxes, Chariots of Fire*. Here he is interviewed by Roy Lockett who is deputy general secretary of the ACTT.**

*Is it possible for us to say that there is an authentic British film industry?*

No. I don't honestly think that has ever been possible. We've always been an adjunct of the American film industry. From time to time there have been enough people making good films in Britain to give the impression that there's a British film industry. Enough of those people have spent enough of their time working in Britain to *look* as though one's dealing in things 'British'. But there has never been an indigenous film industry in the way there's been an Italian, French or American film industry.

*Why did that cultural and economic domination of our industry come into existence?*

I think it started off that way. Film, for good or ill, is an American medium and was grabbed by them very early on. Because we share a language we were never able to throw off that domination. For some extraordinary reason which I can't understand, in the sixties, seventies and eighties, we produced an amazing number of good filmmakers for an industry which in its English language form is inherently 'American'. I certainly don't think there was ever a prewar film industry. Gainsborough was nothing. They were aping American films, and doing them badly. Ealing Studios was the nearest we ever got to a genuinely British studio. In the brief early years of Woodfall it looked as though something might happen, but it didn't. It's too easy to say they sold out. They probably just got better offers.

*How significant is financing? Is it simply a reflection of the fact that the multinational American companies have got a grip on the world market and a certain return, rather than the lottery which making a feature film is without a world market?*

That's hugely significant. There's no question that their grip — and they had it by 1930, before sound — is related to the fact that they have many, many more ways of hedging their bets for an equivalent investment, than a British company has. Five million pounds invested by a British company in a British film is a far, far higher risk investment than the same sum of money invested by an American company in a British film, or an American company investing the same kind of money in an American film. They have control of a great number of the international markets. More control of more money than anyone is really prepared to talk about. In many countries, the Cinema International Corporation (CIC) in Britain would be regarded as a monopoly.

*Monopoly in what sense?*

Monopoly in the sense that they control an unreasonable proportion of the playing time in this country: control of the number of playing weeks per year in British cinemas. I would say that any company that controlled more than 25% of the playing weeks is a monopoly. CIC almost certainly do, certainly the significant playing weeks in the mainstream cinemas, revenue from which we've got to rely on to create an indigenous industry.

*If CIC's not happy with your product, then you have an enormous problem?*

I think that's an overstatement. You could function perfectly well if CIC hated you. But you'd only have available two-thirds to three-quarters of the market. In American terms that means you're dealing with a monopoly. In British terms — and historically we're a monopolistic society — that sort of proportion has never been regarded as being devastating has it? I always get the impression that the Monopolies Commission is talking in terms of someone owning *more* than 50% of the market. In America a monopoly is regarded as being effective far, far earlier than 50%.

*Do you think the situation has deteriorated?*

Yes, it deteriorated a few weeks ago with the incorporation of United Artists into CIC — or whatever it's now called. It deteriorated three years ago when EMI lined up with Warner-Columbia into Warner-Columbia-EMI. It's deteriorated very rapidly in the last five years.

*Is this a critique of a market system? That the needs of the audience, the needs of the filmmaker are not met?*

Yes, that's what I think. I've supported Alan Sapper (ACTT's General Secretary) for years in the notion that what we need in this country is a nationalised, vertically integrated sector not run by market forces; given a different brief. Maybe the brief is to break even. Maybe the brief is only to lose five million quid a year. I don't know what the brief would be. But I certainly think there should be a nationalised sector of the film industry to *compete* with the multinationals.

*What would you see as the composition of that nationalised sector? Would you see it as taking over a studio complex. . .*

Yes, I would.

*A number of cinemas in prime sites, demanding of the state a certain cash sum to invest?*

Well, let's take them one at a time. Without any doubt we're talking about an annual investment by government. Not necessarily an investment that looked for a return: the 'return' would be an amorphous one, more in terms of cultural consciousness and an audio-visual education. I find it difficult to argue the studio case because having worked in a four-wall situation and having worked in a permanent shop situation, my own preference is for a four-wall, because in the end film making is a creative endeavour and it can be extremely difficult to motivate permanent staff in the craft grades to aspire to the same things that you aspire to.

*You mean by four-wall, a situation in which you go into a studio which has no permanent workforce. That you hire separately all of the facilities and freelance personnel you need for the picture and take them all into the studio?*

Yes.

*The great disadvantage of freelancing is the economic insecurity which it entails: unemployment and the absence of a guaranteed annual income. The great advantage of free-*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*lancing is creative mobility — the ability for people to come together in different groupings, in what is essentially a collaborative art like filmmaking. We've never found a balance between that economic insecurity and the creative freedom which freelancing permits.*

Well, I think that's absolutely true. Historically, it has been a facet of bad management because what has inevitably happened in every studio with a permanent shop situation that I've ever come across is that sooner or later the permanent staff wage bill becomes dependent on a certain level of production. That level of production couldn't be sustained by projects anyone *really* wanted to make. It was only a question of time before the issue became: 'Well we've got four rotten scripts — script B is the least rotten, we'd better make it because whether we like it or not, we've got 27 plasterers, 14 carpenters and a sound-crew to keep. So we'd better make something.' It's only a matter of time before you start making films which should never have been made. That's happened time and time again.

*To change the emphasis a little, why have you never really thought about making a film about football fans and football violence, or a film about racism or a film about youth unemployment? You call for an indigenous cinema but in a sense our indigenous cinema, certainly the mainstream, has never addressed itself to those dominant questions.*

It's absolutely true and I can give you a very precise answer. It may not be satisfactory but at least it's accurate and honest. I sat down three or four years ago, with Pete Townsend and Alan Parker, with the specific intention of making a film about football hooliganism. We hoped it was going to be a multi-faceted film: deal with a lot of things. It was going to reflect society and ask some questions. Very early on Pete Townsend brought up the fact that we couldn't find a way of doing it that was going to be attractive and get people to come to see the film without, to some extent, glorifying racism or violence for at least half of the very people that would form its natural audience. Let's assume that Leni Riefenstahl was a Marxist, given the job of making a terrific film about the 1936 Olympic Games. As an artist she couldn't have made a very different film. There might have been the odd scene or frame here or there added or cut, but she wouldn't have made a very different film of the Munich Olympics because film is an emotional medium. If you accept that and if you're steeped in it, as I am, all your instincts are vying to make it emotional. Everything tells you 'Here's a scene and if we hold that shot a bit longer it will have more impact.' It's a very hard thing to control.

*You aren't saying, are you, that the intrinsic difficulties are so enormous that it can't be done?*

I've talked to Tony Garnett about this and in all honesty I'm not sure that I personally have the intellectual weight to take on subject matter like that. This is one of the reasons I bow constantly to Garnett as a filmmaker because he has weight that I haven't got. Conversely, I think there are things I can do that Tony can't. I think I know how to address myself to a *large* audience, a compromise which Tony finds very, very difficult indeed. There's the paradox. I'm a more effective film producer than Tony, in terms of getting to an audience. He's a more effective film-maker than me in terms of the density of his material.

I went into shock after I'd done *Midnight Express*. I thought it was a really good well-made picture, until I saw it with an audience and then I suddenly realised that, as much as anything else, we'd been ripped off. We thought we'd made one film, but in the end we'd made exactly the film Columbia Pictures wanted us to make: a very commercial film where the audience is actually on its feet saying 'go on' during the 'tongue biting' sequence. We thought they'd be under the seats: they were up cheering. That's the kind of misjudgement I realised I was capable of. Don Boyd tells me that *Chariots of Fire* is a jingoistic picture. I don't think it is. I think it's a film about the victory of the individual over the state. He honestly believes it's a film about the state's domination of the individual. I still can't see it, but on the other hand because he says it to me, I've got to believe it. He sat there and watched the film and that's what he came away with.

There is also one very fundamental point. You ask why I'm not developing or making films around the major social issues that confront us in this country such as race, unemployment, Ireland etc. I think the simple reason is that I don't think that *issues* make good films, people do. Show me a good tale about an interesting man or woman who happens to be inextricably caught up in one of these issues, and I think I could produce a film that would both work as a piece of drama and possibly have an effect. But to artificially devise a story around one of these issues would, I am convinced, be a certain recipe for disaster on anything other than an educational level.

*Crucial people, like yourself and Alan Parker, have come out of advertising. People like Hugh Hudson, who directed* 'Chariots of Fire', and *the director Ridley Scott have also come out of advertising. What they've acquired from advertising is a real facility in the use of film*

*A scene from* Chariots of Fire. *Jingoistic? Or a film about the victory of the individual over the state?*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Channel Five

*technique: a disciplined use of camera, use of sound, rehearsal of actors and so on. They have all of that impeccable technique but perhaps less of the kind of political and social luggage which is necessary if you're going to start making feature films which are other than pure entertainment.*

I think what you say is arguable. Hugh's slightly different from the others. He has the kind of upper class guilt which is a very heavy burden: a desperately guilty old-Etonian, who has never been able to justify to himself the advantages he started life with. Alan works off a kind of working-class anger. Ridley's background probably pre-determined his approach. His father was an Army Major. I think Ridley's probably the one who's varied the least. Ridley is what Ridley is. He was the one who turned up in a suit at the Royal College of Art. They all thought he was very strange. He's probably the most brilliant of any of us. Ridley's a painter who happens to use film. Alan is the most complex character, and certainly hasn't defined himself yet. He is somebody who works off conscience. As for me I'm genuinely going through a transition and I don't know where I am. I don't know how far I've gone or even if I'm really on my way back! I was uneducated till the age of 30, to the point that's almost laughable.

*Coming back to the possibility of an indigenous British film industry, by which we mean an industry which makes movies which reflect our way of life, ways of thinking, our problems, rather than one which is a client industry of the United States. They come over here, they hire our technicians, our studios, they make a picture like* Superman *or* Alien *or* Star Wars. *They take it back and it sweeps the market, but we're a hired facility like Hertz. The kind of films you're talking about making are very different from that. Not mid Atlantic, worldwide attractions of that kind. Has it become easier or harder in the last ten years for someone like you, ploughing that kind of lonely furrow, to put that sort of thing together?*

We're as near to having a British film industry now as we ever have been because we've got what the Americans don't have: a wonderful interchange among creators, between theatre, film and television, where a good director, a good writer or a good actor, feels genuinely free to move from one medium to another. That doesn't exist in America. For me personally it's got easier. There's no question. I mean I managed to finance the Bill Forsyth film that we've been working on for a year fairly easily. In the end it was one phone call. I know that on 19 April, 1982 he and I are going to be standing by a camera making a film. It's the first time in my career that's ever happened. In November of one year I can seriously talk about a film I *know* I am going to start in April the next year. In that respect it's certainly easier.

There has been one other, sort of emotional breakthrough. I'll try and explain this

GIVE ME A MONTH!
FEBRUARY!
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY!
GIVE ME A DATE!
14TH
AND WHAT HAVE WE GOT?...YES!
THAT SPECIAL DAY FOR EVERY GIRL
WAKEY WAKEY EUNICE! YOU'RE LATE FOR WORK!
WHEN SHE WAKES EARLY, EXCITED BUT EXHAUSTED AFTER SPENDING MOST OF THE NIGHT
AND THERE'S A MYSTERY CATALOGUE OF THERMAL UNDIES IN THE POST FOR YOU!
WOT? 9.30 ALREADY?
PERFORMING THE COMPLEX SERIES OF RITUALS
WELL, SO MUCH FOR SLEEPING WITH A TOE IN MY EAR AND FACING THE RISING SUN.
TO ENSURE THAT...
YEUCH! NEVER AGAIN DO I TRY CONSOMMÉ OF VIRGIN COCKERELL'S BLOOD
WHEN SHE LOOKS FIRST THING IN THE MIRROR
SHE WILL SEE, REFLECTED BEHIND HER,
THE FACE OF THE LOVED ONE SHE IS DESTINED TO WED.
THAT'S NOT ANOTHER SPOT COMING UP ON MY CHIN?!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in terms that make some sort of real sense. I've felt for many years that one of the defects of British cinema has been that we simply weren't very clever. When I say clever, I admire enormously the films that were done in America in the late thirties and early fifties, the films that really had something to say but managed to say it in ways that didn't swamp the feeling that you'd actually been to the movies. The early Frank Capra films. The early Elia Kazan films. Rightly or wrongly, when I walked out at the end of Zimmerman's *The Search,* or say, *On The Waterfront,* I felt good. It seems to me that there were two generations of filmmakers in America who were able to create films about 'something', and to say it in terms that made you feel that when you paid whatever it was in those days, 3/6d, allowed you to come out of the darkness feeling transformed.

In the British industry we became too didactic, too early. We were making either/or films. 'Carry On' films on the one hand, and hard-nosed films on the other, with very little in between. We weren't being too smart. Now, for example, the film Bill Forsyth's written is in essence an ecology film — pure and simple — *Mr Smith goes to Washington.* It's about two Americans who come over to buy a chunk of Scotland for an oil refinery and end up deciding it's a rotten idea. It's a comedy and I've never done a comedy before — I'm a bit nervous . . . □

# WHAT CHANCE POPULAR THEATRE?

## John McGrath

In a recent article ('we should be the poorer without the Arts Council', *Guardian* 29 Dec 1981), Lord Goodman tells us that the Arts Council has two 'conspicuous and golden virtues: it accepts no political control from its paymaster and, equally important, having bestowed money on its beneficiaries it does not seek to impose any direction on them as to its detailed use.'

My direct experience is that these virtues are not so unassailable as Lord Goodman would have us believe. The current scandal over the position of Richard Hoggart, the reported anxiety of the Tory Minister to replace Sir Roy Shaw with someone who does not dine in the same circles, the interest Mrs Thatcher has shown in the credentials of individual members of the Council, and the alarming change in age, attitude and imaginative response of the average Committee person, all point to an element of political control.

The Arts Minister is unhappy with the Arts Council's annoyance with commercial sponsors of opera who get huge, prestigious advertisements for remarkably little money, while the Arts Council gets scant mention for too much money. It is clear Mr Channon and the government want their generous friends in industry to get the maximum return on their enlightened investment. Given the amount of political control this government has been exercising, the Arts Minister will ensure that his Arts Council changes either its attitude or its personnel.

*7:84 Theatre company in rehearsal*

The idea that the Arts Council does not itself exercise control over the way its clients use their grants is one of those liberal fantasies (like the independence of BBC News) which must surely be smiled at by babes in arms. What the Blessed Arnold has left out is that most companies are dependent on the Arts Council for *next* year's money — therefore they must inflect their policies heavily towards acceptability if they wish to stay in business.

But on the whole, Lord Goodman has a point. The paymasters in Downing Street do not need to 'control' the Arts Council nor does the Arts Council need to police the majority of its clients: there already exists an ideological consensus about the basic and most vital areas of policy and belief — these are rarely even questioned.

The first, which may explain why this Government has been so 'generous' in its grant-in-aid, (a 7½% increase announced for 82/83), is that the Arts Council exists to support mainly middle class activities: operas, concerts, theatres and art exhibitions being of course open to the many, but frequented on the whole, by the few.

The second assumption is that the most important artistic activities — certainly those to be given the largest slices of the cake — are those that take place in central London, and have the dual purpose of representing this Kingdom in the cosmopolitan culture and of enhancing the environment of the metropolis: Covent Garden, the Royal Festival Hall, the National Theatre, and the Royal Shakespeare Company on their way to the Barbican.

The third assumption is that art is not, and should not be, 'political' — that is to say, it should contain some of the contorted values of the capitalist state, implicit or explicit, in its structures and its inner meanings. If its values, implicit or explicit, are *not* those of the capitalist state, it is 'controversial,' 'political,' and, *in extremis,* 'totalitarian.' Therefore art must concentrate on 'refining the language of the tribe' — but not on introducing a new, uncouth vocabulary.

The fourth assumption, the one which makes the others easier on the conscience, is that 'art' is a universal entity, almost a Platonic Ideal, which of course the working classes could partake of, if only they were educated to it: alas, so runs the Weskerite Fallacy — they are *not:* they are Outside Art. So the provision of artistic nourishment for the working classes can safely be postponed until *after* their Education.

Given these four assumptions which form part of the present consensus on what art *is,* or should be, it is hardly surprising that the notion of Popular Theatre, with a different set of values, is receiving something of a pummelling in England these days. In spite of the presence of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* in the West End, followed by several other pieces of theatre — popular and otherwise, — from the touring companies, these companies have been drastically

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reduced in number by the Arts Council. Of those who remain, more and more have become apprentice-sheds for the more highly subsidised, doing variants on the Royal Shakespeare Company theme, rather than being genuinely popular in content or intention. And the few touring or community companies attempting to make a kind of theatre that at least acknowledges the existence of the working class, and making that theatre accessible to popular audiences outside central London, are having a hard time.

To begin with, they find their grants, in real terms, less than adequate for the demands of the work. Petrol, transport and accommodation costs, timber, and printing — all the basic materials of their work —have inflated out of all proportion to their grants. Wages have to be kept low, which drives out all but the really committed or the really desperate. Income cannot increase greatly: you simply can't charge £8.50 per seat in a community centre. And local authorities find it very hard to help either the venues or the visiting companies in the way they once could. Yes, times are hard, but perhaps no harder than they are for many millions of people today.

What adds to the problems of popular touring theatre in the early 80s, is the gradual depoliticisation of the theatrical profession. It is no longer fashionable to be involved in politics as touring theatre, as it once, not long ago, was. Due in part to the overall success of the depoliticisation campaign of the Thought Police, in part to a massive backlash against some hysterical activities within Equity which failed to bring about the millenium, and in part to fear of losing jobs through association with the Left, this movement within the profession is accompanied by a massive reversion of film, television and stage to safe, sweet and profitable nostalgia.

The main result of all the work of the late 60s, and the 70s, has been the creation — with Arts Council help — of an audience, all over Britain, of working people, students, youth and progressive individuals within the professional middle class, who want this kind of theatre; and some of them will help to organise visits of companies or support the activities of their local community group. This audience is large, and growing, and does not believe itself to be outside art, any more than it believes that it should go to the National Theatre for its political education. This audience is there waiting for the theatrical profession to get its head out of the 20s, and the Arts Council to start putting its money towards the many with a bit more determination, and for writers and directors to realise not so much a moral duty to make theatre for popular audiences but rather the excitement that a dialogue with this audience can generate, and the richness of the experience and language of those millions whose lives create the wealth of this country.

The trade union and labour movement should also try to develop a more sophisticated, demanding and informed approach to the problems of art and the people. It's no good demanding that the National Theatre goes to Dagenham, if all the actors 'despise' the audience: it won't work. The point, as always, is to start with the consciousness of the people: it is the best, and most difficult, struggle the theatre can offer.

There are still quite a few of us working in popular theatre. I feel confident that by the end of the 80s there will be many more, and that the demands of the audiences will have forced us to produce work that is more subtle, more complex, and more artistically mature. Between now and then, a lot of hard political work has to be done. □

Collet's

COLLET'S LONDON BOOKSHOP
64-66 Charing Cross Road London WC2

**A Selection of our Books on Ireland**

**We Shall Rise Again**
Nora Connolly O'Brien
£1.95 pb

**Ireland Her Own**
T A Jackson
£2.50 pb

**The Singing Flame**
Ernie O'Malley
£2.50 pb

**Tell Them Everything**
Margaretta D'Arcy
£1.95 pb

**War and an Irish Town**
Eamonn McCann
£1.95 pb

**Irish Women Speak Out: a plan of action**
The National Women's Forum
£1.20 pb

**Under the Starry Plough**
Frank Robbins
£3.95 pb

**Shop open;**
Mon, Tues, Weds 10am — 6.30pm
Thurs 10am — 7pm
Fri 10.30am — 7pm
Sat 10am — 6pm

**Telephone 01-836 6306**
Send cheques, postal orders or book tokens to the above address

**please allow 40p per book for post and packing, or £2 for 5 books or more.**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Reviews

**SOLIDARITY: POLAND'S INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION**
Denis MacShane
Spokesman 1981. Pbk £3.50
*ISBN 0 85124 318 5*

**POLAND: THE STATE OF THE REPUBLIC**
Reports by the 'Experience and the Future' Discussion Group (DiP) Warsaw, ed M Vale
Pluto Press 1981. Pbk £4.95
*ISBN 0 86104 343 X*

Denis MacShane is particularly well qualified to present to the Western public the development and the achievements of Poland's independent trade union Solidarity. He is an official of the International Metalworkers' Federation and is well acquainted with problems of trade unionism in many countries. He also views these problems in a broad international perspective and is aware that no clear line of division can (or should) be drawn between politics and 'pure' trade unionism.

His book is based mostly on Polish sources, on conversations and discussions with Polish activists — by luck or instinct he found competent and congenial interpreters during his travels. He pays a handsome and deserved tribute to D Singer, whose *Road to Gdansk* provided him with much topical information.

MacShane briefly recapitulates the relevant events which preceded the 'hot summer' of 1980: the Poznan rising and the 'liberalisation' of 1956; the upheaval of 1968 and the tragic end of the Gomulka reign in the winter of 1970; the ferment of the Gierek decade; the formation of KOR which brought about the fruitful cooperation of workers and intellectuals. Then he recalls the dramatic days of the August strike which led to the signing of the historic Gdansk agreements and, after a great deal of bargaining with the government, to the *de jure* registration of the new union; the conflict and confrontation of the Bydgoszcz affair in March 1981; the emergence, in May 1981, of the peculiar 'trade union' of individual farmers — the Rural Solidarity. This all followed months of tension, conflict, confrontation, and compromise with the authorities who tried unsuccessfully to stem the irresistible growth of Solidarity into a force embracing nearly ten million people.

By perceptively sketching the profile of the populist leader Lech Walesa, MacShane shows how this astonishing champion of workers' rights, with the badge of the Holy Virgin in his lapel, the portrait of the Pope, and admiration for Marshal Pilsudski, expressed the social and national aspirations of the workers with whom he so effectively acted in unison. He became the truly 'indispensable' leader created by the movement which he successfully led during the most crucial months of the struggle.

MacShane carries his story up to June 1981, that is to the period preceding the Extraordinary Congress of the Polish United Workers Party, in July, and the first Congress of Solidarity in September-October.

Within the limits which the author consciously imposed on himself, he fulfils his task admirably. Writing as an active trade unionist, his object was to 'widen understanding about the work of Solidarity as a trade union of workers'. He achieves exemplary lucidity in explaining the structure of Solidarity, its organisational basis, its procedures, its statutes, its finances, its everyday functions and preoccupations. Because MacShane treats all these intricate questions with reference to Western trade unions, they become more easily comprehensible to Western activists for whom his little volume is an indispensable handbook. At the outset he decided to deal only with industrial Solidarity, that is the industrial working class, leaving aside the peasants and other layers of Polish society. Only very briefly does he mention the great and intractable economic problems.

However, it is obvious that Solidarity which, in a formal or informal way, embraced — until the military takeover — about 80% of the country's population, could no longer be viewed as a trade union only. Whenever MacShane ventures beyond his self-imposed limits, he is less satisfactory. He is clearly bewildered by the relations between Solidarity and the Church and in the chapter devoted to this subject makes a number of vague, contradictory and highly debatable points. Of course, it is one thing to explain the history of a one-year-old trade union, and quite another to understand the politics of an institution which a few years ago celebrated its millenium.

The title of the chapter on 'Economic Reform — is Self-Management an Answer?' is quite properly formulated as a question. MacShane can do no more than report on the discussions he had on this subject with the leaders and advisers of Solidarity. Although it is generally accepted that self-management in industry is the key to a major socio-political reform, the actual method of self-management, its structure and scope, was not elaborated. Nor was any comprehensive project for economic reform put forward either by the government or by Solidarity, although various tentative versions were discussed at length by both sides.

The fact that Solidarity was not able to work out its own agreed plan of self-management may, in part, be due to the origin and character of the organisation. MacShane remarks, in his final chapter, that Solidarity is 'the first mass workers' movement to develop without a theoretical base', and he adds that 'Some might say that this is the union's greatest strength — it has not had to carry loads of ideological luggage...'. It might also be said — and perhaps more correctly — that this was Solidarity's greatest weakness, that its lack of 'theoretical base' hampered it in producing a theoretical blueprint for a major reform which could not be introduced spontaneously and haphazardly. It is quite possible that a trade union may come into being 'without a load of ideological luggage', but perhaps some of this 'luggage' is needed to introduce the essence of genuine socialism into a country which so far has only had the first premise of it.

The second book consists of an English version of documents prepared in Poland by the discussion group 'Experience and the Future' (DiP) prior to August 1980. Initially the group was sponsored by a state-run educational forum but lost that sponsorship when it became clear that its general approach

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deviated considerably from party orthodoxy.

*Poland: the State of the Republic* is based on a survey of Polish public opinion gathered by means of a questionnaire. The chief purpose of the survey was to find out to what the respondents ascribed the wide-spread malaise and dissatisfaction rending Polish society, and how they proposed to remedy it. What, in fact, the survey produced was an indictment of the postwar regime, and not very bold or even positive methods to improve it. Of marxist or socialist ideology there is hardly any evidence.

The great 'trade union revolution' of August 1980 brought the dissatisfaction and popular anger to the surface thus overtaking in a sense the considerations of the contributors to the volume. However, the documents still remain of interest to those who try to go to the roots of the disintegration of the Polish regime. What detracts from their value is the fact that there is no way of establishing how representative are the opinions expressed in the book, or their relative weight and importance. The editors preserve an absolute anonymity and we are only told that the questions were addressed to about a hundred people 'of various philosophical outlooks, in various scholarly fields and the arts, journalists and public figures' both in the party and outside it. H Ticktin and G Schöpflin do manage to introduce the rather wordy and sprawling documents concisely on a few informative pages.

**Tamara Deutscher**

**SUBJECT WOMEN**
**Ann Oakley**
Martin Robertson 1981 Hbk £9.50
*ISBN 85520 347 1*

'Women's studies? It isn't even semantically correct!' These were the recent irritated sentiments of a director of a large Polytechnic. The idea that grammatical rules are eternal rather than changed by usage, is a long time dying! The difficulties women face in using male-stream language to try to make sense of our experiences are only just beginning to be studied so perhaps Ann Oakley can be excused for omitting any discussion of this in her book *Subject Women;* this omission is my major criticism of her work. *Subject Women* is a gathering together of recent thought on the main strands in women's lives: the struggle for participation in government through the vote and parliament, education and socialisation, work, both paid and domestic, and relationships. Oakley quotes research and study in all these areas and gives useful statistics. Unfortunately,

Ann Oakley

not all the tables are as clear as one could have hoped.

Increasingly, a woman's work outside the home is necessary to take the two-adult household out of poverty. The 'family wage' has become a myth, for a substantial number


# A History of The Soviet Union

Vol 1: Lenin — revolution and power
Vol 2: Stalin — order through terror

*Hélène Carrère d'Encausse*

This exceptionally lucid and readable study traces the course of the Revolution from the socialist ideals of Lenin through to the despotism and dictatorship of the Stalin era. The two volumes provide an astute political analysis of the Revolution and its achievements covering the events which have shaped Russia's relations with the West today.

Paper £4.95 net each volume
You can order through any good bookseller, or in case of difficulty from Linda Cockram, Longman House, Burnt Mile, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE. Cheques payable to Longman Group Ltd.

Longman

# Merlin Press

**BEYOND THE COLD WAR**
E P Thompson
Originally prepared as the Dimbleby Lecture this pamphlet questions the basis of the European perma-frost. 60p

**THE NON-JEWISH JEW**
Isaac Deutscher
'The book is quite simply an education.' *(City Limits)* £2.70, pb

**SOCIALIST REGISTER 1981**
Eds. Ralph Miliband and John Saville
'All those interested in the deeper treatment of the theory and practice of the struggle for Socialism today, will find this book valuable.' *(Morning Star)* £4.50, pb

**SHARPEN THE SICKLE**
Reg Groves
'Every few pages offers a flash of blinding, bitter light on rural life in the past century and a half.' *(Tribune)* £2.40, pb

**THE LOOM OF LANGUAGE**
Frederick Bodmer
Reprinted from 1944, a 700-page study in the dialectics of the development of language. £10.00, cloth

**3 Manchester Road, London E14**


PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of male wage earners cannot support a dependent wife and children on the money they earn. A woman who is the only breadwinner is even less able to support the household. Oakley summarises this: 'The low pay of women can thus be seen as the lever that takes women and children out of poverty and as the anchor that keeps them there.'

In examining women's domestic labour within the home, Oakley points out that domestic work varies between different cultures, and different points in history. One of the rich aspects of Oakley's book is the way she constantly compares the experience of women in Western, twentieth century industrial society with women's situation in other times and places. Housework, she says, used to be much less of a service industry, more a productive one, producing clothes, food and implements. Today, the elimination of dirt and disorder, noticeable only when they are around and not in their absence, forms a large part of housework. Oakley includes a brief examination of the Marxist view of domestic labour, and whether or not it can be regarded as productive labour in the classical sense, and concludes that this is an unproductive way of considering the issue. If domestic labour doesn't fit neatly into the theories, then this is evidence of the insufficiency of the theories. Similarly she discusses theories of social class, and argues that the struggle between workers and capital is not the only struggle in society, and unity of interest within the household cannot automatically be assumed. Even classifying women by their occupation is insufficient, since this may not reflect their social position if this is mediated by the husband's position.

The most interesting parts of the book are those on relationships and power. In her discussion of relationships between the sexes, it is the men's role that Oakley sees as problematic, at a time when slowly but surely, women are achieving some economic independence. Women have their role as child bearers, and rearers of young children. If a father is not economically necessary, what is his role? 'What', Oakley asks, 'are husbands for?' Their function is not obvious, but 'wrestled out of a strictly cultural mould.'

Sisterhood, or the relation of woman to woman, has been well hidden, as demanded by the emphasis on the nuclear family and women's supposed immersion in it. Recent studies which 'discovered' the existence of lively and continuing mother-daughter and other co-operative contacts between women have been received with surprise in some quarters. They have supported, says Oakley, those psychological theories which suggest the 'emotional secondariness' that men play in women's lives, the primacy being the relations between daughter and mother, woman friend and woman friend, 'the magnetic focus of attachment for all women throughout their adult careers of alliancing with men.' She does not discuss the uncomfortable side of these relationships between women, though she suggests that, contrary to accepted ideas, there is a separation in women's experience between emotional closeness and heterosexual expression.

Oakley makes a clear distinction between power, and authority, the second being the recognised and validated version of the first, and asserts that women do have some power but little authority. One view she reports is that the oppression of women may be due to a lack of understanding, by women, of the power they possess and an unwillingness or inability to use it. She also raises the question of whether women should seek to develop and legitimise the power they have in the private sphere, rather than attempting to attain authority by climbing through the public hierarchies, to the 'top' of trade unions, political parties and organs of the state. These are fundamental questions for the women's liberation movement, but they must be tackled without forgetting the immense power the public sphere possesses to intervene in the private sphere.

Oakley concludes her work with a section on studying women, and the making of women's studies into an academic area in its own right. She suggests that there are two starting points in such studies. One is to look at measurements of women's participation in those areas previously regarded as 'men's business.' The other is to 'begin with the view of culture and gender identity generated by women', which implies an ideological difference between the sexes. It is in that difference that the crux of the matter lies, for the two ideologies are valued differently. Should women aim to be the same as men, or be pleased to be different?

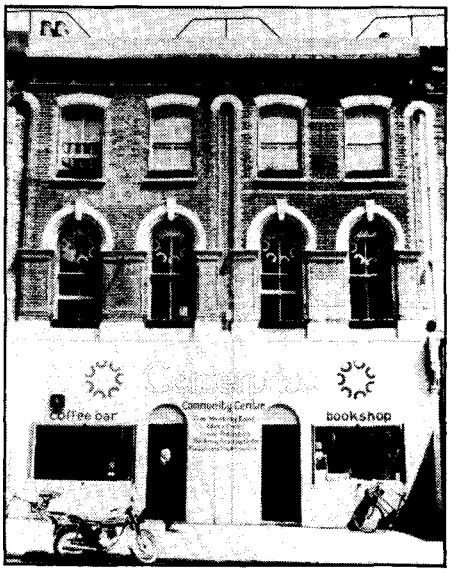
Oakley's task, in a book like this, is not to answer questions, but to pose them. For those of us intensely interested in solving these questions, this work is unsatisfactory. But as a book written as a text for women's studies courses, to inform, to provide references for more detailed study, and to identify those issues which are as yet unresolved and the subject of current debate, it is extremely successful.

**Vicky Seddon**

# NOTES

## CENTERPRISE IN CRISIS

*Betsy Brewer writes:* Centerprise is a community centre in Hackney, East London. Founded ten years ago, it is in acute financial crisis as a result of cuts in government grants. Most of the facilities we offer are of use primarily to the local community — the advice centre, coffee bar, bookshop and meeting rooms — but some are of value far beyond the confines of the East End.




Since 1972 we have published over 40 books written by local working class people —these range from autobiographies of taxi drivers and accounts of the experience of childbirth, to booklets evolved from literacy schemes and poems by black school pupils. These books have been used in schools and colleges throughout the country, and have even been exported in bulk for use by WEAs in other countries.

If Centerprise closes, the first losers will be the local community, but a much wider public will also suffer the losses, notably, that which has found in the books we have published an affirmation of the strength and vitality of working class culture. You can help us to survive by sending donations and resolutions of support from TU branches, women's groups, tenants' associations, community groups and individuals to: Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

## THE FUTURE OF BRITISH AEROSPACE

*Bill Niven writes:* A new pamphlet published by TASS examines a vital area of industrial policy. The government is on the brink of two major decisions for the future of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

British industry — whether or not to fund the next airbus project and the new combat aircraft designated P110.

Its decision will make or break British Aerospace and the thousands of subcontractors dependent upon it. The government has a choice. At a time when Japan is pouring millions into aircraft development, it could continue with its catastrophic laissez-faire policies, argue that BAe must be competitive in the market place — and refuse the money. Britain will then witness an American or Japanese takeover and the collapse of Britain's flourishing aerospace and avionics industries.

Alternatively, it could recognise that no major aircraft manufacturer can any longer 'go it alone', accept that aerospace is of a national and strategic importance, and give Britain's beleaguered industry a much needed fillip.

The pamphlet argues that government cannot stand back from supporting Britain's aerospace industry. It covers the dangers of BAe denationalisation, the effects of the Defence Review and the benefits of British involvement in the airbus industry. Its central recommendation is for a national aerospace strategy, uniting Britain's defence requirements, but also envisaging strong collaboration with Rolls Royce and British Airways on the civil side.

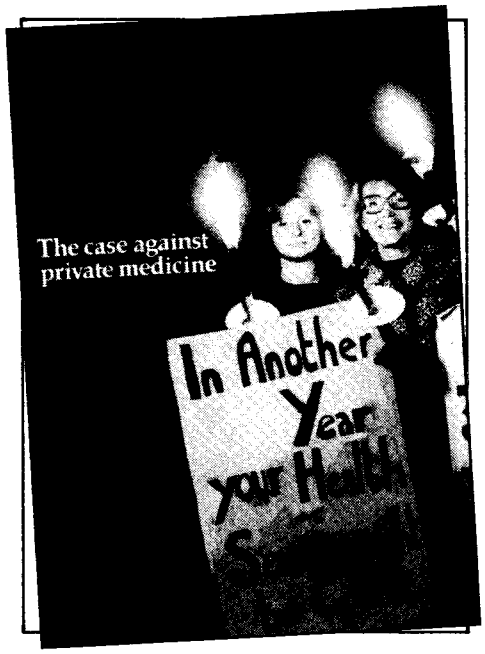
Priced at 50p, the pamphlet is available from: TASS, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey.

### GOING PRIVATE. THE CASE AGAINST PRIVATE MEDICINE

*Jane Salvage writes:* New information about the growth of private medicine is revealed in *Going Private*, a report published recently by the Politics of Health Group and Fightback. It gives full details of the unprecedented expansion of the private sector — and includes a wealth of material never before collected in one volume, including information on insurance and treatment costs, the invasion by American companies and a survey of recent hospital development.

The report examines why increasing numbers of people, and not just the middle classes, are turning to the private sector. And it explodes common myths perpetrated by commercial organisations and Harley Street — that fee-for-service payment ensures better care, and that private medicine is helping the NHS by reducing its workload.

The private sector, it argues, boosted by government policy, is trading off the deficiencies of the NHS — deficiencies which




are being exacerbated by cuts in public spending. The report puts the case for a different kind of publicly funded health service, which will take full account of radical prevention, attack the social causes of ill health and be built upon equal relationships between health workers and people using the service.

*Going Private* costs 70p and is available from bookshops or by post from POHG, c/o 9 Poland Street, London W1 — postage and packing 30p extra.

### WOMEN IN ENTERTAINMENT

*Paula Brown writes: Women in Entertainment* is a broadly-based group aimed at initiating and supporting activity which seeks to challenge the position of women working in the entertainment industry. On Sunday 15 November 1981 we held our third annual conference at the Lyric Theatre in London. The theme was *Women Live*, a national programme of women's cultural work which will take place in May of this year.

In the morning women visited the information desks for all the different regions and in the different fields of work — music, film, video, television, radio, new writing, dance and new projects. This informal exchange of information enabled us to develop a more coherent picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation so far. In the afternoon we met together for report backs, questions and discussion. Both the treasurer and national co-ordinator stressed the financial precariousness of the organisation, and the urgent need for funding initiatives if *Women Live* is to realise its potential. This cautionary note was offset by reports from regional organisers which indicated the enormous amount of interest engendered by *Woman Live* and the number and variety of events already planned, at both amateur and professional level.

The latter part of the day was devoted to discussion on questions of publicity, fundraising and policy. Much remains to be done, but the conference illlustrated the potential of *Women Live.*

For further information contact: Women in Entertainment, 11 Acklam Road, London W10 (Tel: 01-969 2292).

---

Contributions to *Notes* (brief please) are welcome. We need copy by the 1st of the month preceding publication.

**How to make up your mind about the bomb.**
Robert Neild. £2.95 + 65p p&p
**Defence of the Realm.**
Dan Smith £6.95 + £1.10 p&p
**Militarism and Repression**
Michael Randall. £1.95 + 35p p&p
**Politics of nuclear disarmament.**
Martin H Ryle. £2.50 + 35p p&p
**Housemans**
Housemans, 5, Caledonian Rd. London N1. 01-837 4473.

**bloomin' good design, camerawork and print at Blackrose**

An NGA-recognised workers' co-operative offering a sympathetic print and design service for the labour movement, the women's movement, community and solidarity groups and left publications.
We also handle typesetting and finishing
30 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 Tel 01-251 3043

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## Warm to the Gaiety of a Traditional Russian Holiday!

**WINTER AND SPRING TOURS**

8-15 days FROM **£210** all inclusive

**TROIKA rides in fairyland scenery. The fabulous WINTER FESTIVAL in Moscow and Leningrad. A feast of entertainments.**

Winter and Spring Tours from now until May '82. 1st class hotels, no surcharges. London air departures. For a super selection of unique holidays in the USSR send for the colourful new brochure.

Phone, call or write (24 hour answer phone):

**Intourist Moscow Limited**
292 Regent Street, London W1R 7PO
Tel: 01-631 1252 ABTA Member

Please send me the Free INTOURIST Winter/Spring 81/82 Brochure

Name.....

Address.....

.....

**INTOURIST**
**the International Tour People for the USSR**

## See RUSSIA at it's best!

FROM **£240** all inclusive 8-15 day holidays

**SUN & SEA or CITY TOURS**

Travel from coast to coast in the USSR on real value-for-money holidays at guaranteed prices and take a truly memorable holiday in a country that spans two continents.

**New! 5-nights City Breaks in Moscow and/or Leningrad**
**New! Exclusive itineraries from Manchester**

Air departures from LONDON and MANCHESTER from May 8. Phone, call or write (24 hour answer phone):

**Intourist Moscow Limited** ABTA Member
292 Regent St., London W1R 7PO. Tel: 01-631 1252

Please send me the Free INTOURIST Summer 82 Brochure

Name.....

Address.....

.....

**INTOURIST-the International Tour People for the USSR**

**1982** *Highlight summer tours...*

## In the German Democratic Republic

These de-luxe 12-day Highlight Tours take you through the hospitable German Democratic Republic, with its spectacular mountain scenery, peaceful lakelands and forests, romantic castles. The choice of 12-day tours offered includes visits to some of Europe's loveliest cities and towns—ancient Magdeburg, modern Berlin, beautiful Dresden and towns steeped in cultural history like Weimar and Eisenach.

The guaranteed price of £199 includes flight via Gatwick, travel by luxury coach in the G.D.R. with interpreter and guide, accommodation in first class hotels; half-board and all sightseeing and entry fees.

*Berolina also offer 'Special Interest' group tours including art, music, architecture or steam trains. Individually arranged car or coach tours, 3, 4, or 7 days from £32 (start and finish in Berlin).*

*Plus MARTIN LUTHER special 'Anniversary' Tours.*

**Even BETTER Value** AT A LOWER PRICE THAN 2 YEARS AGO **Only £199**

*For 12 days (guaranteed price)*

**Phone: 01-629 1664**

*Book now for July & August*

Write or phone for your free 1982 brochure from:

ABTA member ATOL 980B

**Berolina travel ltd**

**Tourist Office of the German Democratic Republic.**
Dept MT/1, 20 Conduit Street, London W1R 9TD
Tel: 01-629 1664. Or from your Travel Agent

## WORLD MARXIST REVIEW

*January issue includes*

**US Imperialism in the Real World**
Gus Hall

**The Sante Fe Seducers**
Volodia Teitelboim

**In the Mirror of the Press**
Hector Blanco

**Resisting the Diktat**
Izzeddin Amer

**'Cooperation' in Torture Camp**
Rashid Afzal

*Single issue 40p Subscription (1 year) £6.00 for 12 issues*
Apply to WMR, Central Books,
14 The Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER

## BALKAN HOLIDAYS No 1

**to Bulgaria and Eastern Europe '82**

Bigger and better choice of holidays ever offered. All prices fully guaranteed to Bulgaria and Black Sea resorts.

2 weeks from £179 full board — summer holidays
1 week from £129 half board — winter holidays.

Real value for money plus 50% currency bonus and duty-free shopping.

**The best family offers with some free holidays**

Direct flights from 6 UK airports
Dine where and when you please in Bulgaria.

**Balkan Holidays Club Hotels in Bulgarian resorts.**

Exciting new city breaks to Prague, Warsaw, Moscow & Leningrad.

*Book with us.*

BALKAN HOLIDAYS

**Balkan Holidays Ltd.,**
**1st Floor,**
**Carrington House,**
**126-130 Regent St.,**
**London W1R 6BD.**
**Tel: (Reservations) 01-734 8455.**
**(Administration) 01-439 3621.**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# WORLD WIDE TRAVEL IN '82

## Specialist Tour Operator to the Labour and Student Movements

AIR AND FERRY TICKETS ISSUED IMMEDIATELY o PACKAGE HOLIDAYS

## THE FAR HORIZON

### USA — CUBA — SOUTH AMERICA

Weekly departures via Miami to the USA and Havana with wide choice of optional programmes in the USA and Cuba. Also package holidays in Cuba via Madrid, and new facilities to Nicaragua, Costa Rica and other destinations in South America.

### TRANS-SIBERIA TO CHINA AND JAPAN

Independent or group travel via trans-Siberian rail or air routes to Mongolia, Beijing, China or Japan, returning via HongKong or continuing to Australia or the West Coast. From £265.

### ALGERIA — NORTH AND WEST AFRICA

Wide choice of spring and summer holidays in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Gambia and Senegal. For more information, phone/write Frank Norall.

## SPECIALIST TRAVEL

We specialise in study tours and holidays with a purpose, particularly to the USSR and Eastern Europe. Phone/write Benedict Brouard for details.

### RUSSIAN LANGUAGE COURSES IN USSR

3-12 weeks for all levels, spring, summer and autumn, in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Kharkov etc.

### STUDY TOURS

in education, art and architecture, ballet and theatre, sport and physical education, Russian life and language for schools, archaeology etc, throughout the western USSR, Georgia, central Asia and Siberia.

### TRADE UNION GROUP HOLIDAYS

to the USSR and Eastern Europe, Italy, France, Spain and Greece in association with national Trade Union organisations. School group travel: in association with Sputnik and Intourist in the USSR, LUJ in France, and all member organisations of BITEJ

## SUMMER BREAKS

YUGOSLAVIA: two weeks holidays to Dubrovnik, Becice. From £175.

ITALY: Rimini and Ravenna, plus low cost charter of yacht with crew to Yugoslavia and Greece. From Co-optourist of Ravenna.

RUMANIA: cycling or touring with your own car from £95

BULGARIA: Bargain mountain, city and seaside holidays

USSR: 15 days youth tours to Georgia, Ukraine

GDR: lake and seaside holidays in July and August from £198

## *Progressive Tours Ltd.*

12 Porchester Place, Marble Arch, London W2 2BS
Telephone 01 262 1676. Telex 25135. ABTA IATA BAGTA

**Also many other brochure holidays available worldwide. Phone/write Bob Allen and Adolpho Lopez for details**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED